



THE INDEPENDENT

Tuesday 23 December 1997

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Pretty. But £39m each, second best and with no enemy. You've just bought 232 of them



Defence of the realm: Michael Jarvis and his sister Claire, admiring a model at Garrards, the crown jewellers, in Regent Street, of the Eurofighter, the warplane for which formal agreement to build was signed yesterday in Bonn. Michael and Claire's father, Tim, of Garrards, originated the idea of making a 1/16th scale solid silver replica of the plane. The 13kg, 33-inch long working model is valued at £75,000 and is linked through a computer system that manoeuvres the plane. Eurofighter deal, page 10. Photograph: Brian Harris

Farmers facing early retirement as beef industry is forced to shrink

The Government signalled a big scaling down of the British beef industry last night amid falling prices and demand. This could mean early retirement deals for farmers wanting to get out of the business. Fran Abrams, Political Correspondent, heard the Agriculture Minister spell out his vision to MPs.

Subsidies to the beef industry of £3.4bn over this year and next could not be maintained. Jack Cunningham told the Commons last night.

The Agriculture Minister promised "exceptional, one-off help" amounting to £85m over the coming year while at the same time announcing an inquiry, headed by a Lord of Appeal, into the history of BSE.

Britain should join a European scheme already operating in 10 countries to offer pay-offs to farmers to quit, he said. Too much beef was being produced and the industry must be made viable.

Officials said Britain would use its presidency of the European Union in the next six months to push for progress on large-scale reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy to bring down subsidies. The CAP had been useful when it was set up to feed Europe after the war, they said, but now it was encouraging overproduction.

Farming unions and other bodies would be consulted about the proposals, which would take between a year and 18 months to implement.

All European Union nations apart from the UK, the Netherlands, Luxembourg,

Sweden and Austria had already joined the early retirement scheme, which is 50 per cent funded by Europe.

Mr Cunningham said the European Commission had accepted that restructuring was vital, and had already proposed radical changes. The British government believed it should start now. "There is oversupply of beef throughout Europe, and a long-term decline in the consumption of beef everywhere..."

"Our long-term aim should be to reduce the size of the subsidy to producers," Mr Cunningham warned

beef farmers that they should plan on the basis that major changes were coming. There would be fewer farmers, but consumers, the beef industry and the environment would all benefit in the long term.

The Government would use £60m from an EU compensation scheme designed to offset the effects of the strong pound – something for which farmers had been pressing – to help hill farmers, he said.

The inquiry, which would be non-statutory and would not take evidence from ministers, would be headed by Lord Justice Phillips. It would look at

how BSE and new variant CJD emerged, and at the action taken in response to it up to March 1996, when far-reaching measures were announced by the last government. It would report by the end of next year.

Michael Jack, opposition agriculture spokesman, responded: "This is a miserable little statement given by a minister exhibiting Scrooge-like tendencies. It will do nothing to enhance the safety of British beef and farmers will see it for what it is. He has lost out to the Treasury and failed British agriculture."

Beef crisis, page 7

The loneliest children at Christmas

Christmas is for children, they say. But this year, thousands of Albanian children are living a lonely and loveless existence in stark orphanages. While British children look forward to a glut of toys and entertainment, some British volunteers are trying to give these abandoned young Europeans a future.

The outside of the children's home is a slum. Piles of rotting rubbish lie alongside broken cans, rolls of wire, old hubcaps. Stray dogs, some covered with sores, forage for food. There is a strong smell of sewage.

Not that the 52 abandoned children in the old Albanian orphanage would know anything about their surroundings. They have never been outside in their lives. They spend their

time in five filthy, over-heated rooms, some three to a cot, deathly pale with lack of sunlight – the curtains are never drawn and the windows never opened for fear of "germs" – and they stand in sinister silence, many just rocking from side to side or picking the walls, staring at the door and waiting for a human being to come to it and, if they're lucky, pat them on the head. Up to the age of three the cot is their home.

Except for the attentions of British volunteers, no one comes to pick them up or talk to them. They are fed and watered – and that's it. It is an absolutely heartbreaking scene.

I went with my cousin, Caroline Cook and her husband Colonel Mark Cook, who set up the charity Hope and Homes for Children three years ago, to see the opening of a new home in Durres, Albania, in which these children will have a chance of a more stimulating life – and, hopefully, a chance of becoming reunited with the parents who abandoned them.

You cannot resist picking up the children, though they hardly know how to smile or hold out their arms to anyone, so rarely do they experience the warmth of a hug or the security of a cuddle. And once you pick them up they like it. The moment you put them down they spring into organising life, screaming, rocking, banging their heads against the cot.

Except for the attentions of British volunteers, no one comes to pick them up or talk to them. They are fed and watered – and that's it. It is an absolutely heartbreaking scene.

"When we first came here conditions were even worse than they are now," says Caroline, whose husband started Hope and Homes after rebuilding a bombed orphanage in Sarajevo with the help of his troops when

he was stationed there during the war in Bosnia. The organisation now has homes in Lipik, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Eritrea.

"There was a playroom, but it was always locked. The toys were put on high shelves or locked away in cupboards. It was just too difficult for the staff to get them out and clean them up.

Sometimes the children would be taken out of their cots and sat for hours in front of a huge television and if they moved they were ticked off. Now, with the help of our British volunteers, the children get a little more stimulation, but with the cots jammed up against each other, there just isn't space to get them out, teach them to walk or let them run around."

The new home is vast, full of light, with playgrounds, a soft-

ball room, proper kitchens and laundry. It was opened last week; the bronze plaque, to thank members of Britain's Rotary Clubs which have put in £150,000 to get the orphanage set up and have promised £300,000 more, was made of melted down figures of Stalin and Lenin. The Rotarians also provided 50 teddy-bears from the memorials to Diana, Princess of Wales.

Albania has had a dreadful time. Never a prosperous country, its economy was devastated by Socialist rule, and then further damaged by the great pyramid selling scam. A new Socialist government is now in power after a short and bloody civil war, but although the curtain has been lifted, there is still anxiety.

"Setting up the home was a nightmare which has taken two-and-a-half years fighting with corrupt politicians, bureaucracy and armed squatters," says Mark. British volunteers find it hard to take. Three live in a one-bedroomed flat with no telephone

and spasmodic electricity. After 4pm they are virtually confined to the flat as it is too dangerous to go out at night, even accompanied. Some find conditions unbearable and more volunteers are desperately needed.

Most of the children, unless they are adopted or reunitited with their families or looked after by Hope and Homes, face a future in mental hospitals because they become so apathetic and institutionalised there is no other way they can live.

Caroline says: "We want to have a high turnover of children and encourage parents to come back and get to know their children again. Sometimes we've taken a mother back with her child to her parents who simply don't want to know. We then ask if we could have half an hour in private with the daughter, and leave the baby with the disapproving grandparents. Often when we get back they are dancing their grandchild on their knee."

Hope and Homes for Children, East Cliffe, Salisbury, SP3 4LZ (telephone 01722 790111)

INSIDE TODAY

One fat lady confesses: I wish I had killed my father
PAGE 13



Feed your young well: let them eat crisps and cake
HEALTH, PAGE 11

Exclusive: Interview with a banana
THE EYE

TODAY'S NEWS

Rethink over Al Fayed

Mohamed Al Fayed, the Harrods store chief, has been told that his long-standing application for British citizenship is to be reconsidered. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, announced that he would no longer contest a ruling by the Court of Appeal that applications by Mr Fayed and his brother Ali had been unlawfully turned down. Page 3

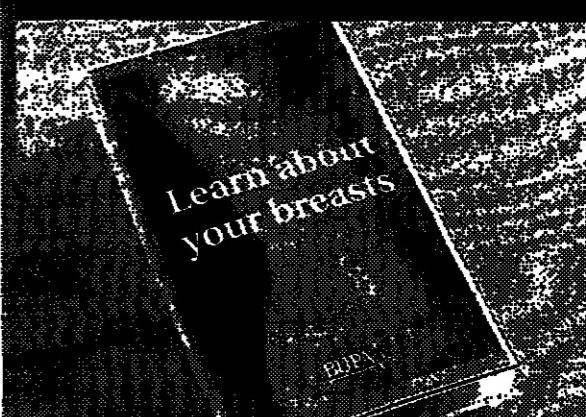
Disabled in No 10 protest

The Prime Minister denied that he was proposing unChristian cuts to disabled people's benefits as protesters threw paint at Downing Street's gates. Page 6

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CROSSWORDS Page 28 and The Eye, page 9
WEATHER The Eye, page 10

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COLUMN ONE

Santa goes gunning for Christmas booty

Years of dispensing Christmas cheer and giving presents to all the little children have finally taken their toll on Santa Claus. This year, instead of arriving laden with gifts he has made several appearances at stores in Germany wielding only a Kalashnikov.

Shopkeepers believe that a heavily armed bandit disguised as St Nick has robbed several shops in southern Germany, while another Santa tried to sexually molest an employee at an electronics company near Erfurt.

Newspapers have published numerous accounts – and photographs for those who are not quite sure what Santa looks like – of the robberies, but authorities complain that the thieves often escape because they can quickly blend into the holiday decorations and disappear after their hold-ups.

"A man in a Santa outfit with a long white beard stood politely in line and when he got to the cashier, pulled out a Kalashnikov rifle and started shooting," said Edmund Hart, whose convenience store in Aschaffenburg was robbed. "My clerks were too shocked to do anything but hand him the money," said Mr Hart, who rushed to his shop from a Christmas party to find shattered displays and 18 bullet holes in the wall. "He spoke perfect German without any trace of a dialect, demanded the money and started to shoot."

Mr Hart said customers fled from the shop and the bandit escaped without trace. The shop assistants are being treated for injuries to their cars.

Police believe the same Father Christmas was responsible for a similar attack two days later at a supermarket near Nuremberg where the thief made off with 5,000 marks (£1,740). They have two theories for the San-



Christmas fear: Kalashnikovs have been used by Santa outlaws

ta Claus crime wave; some amateur crooks find it hard to raise enough money for presents, others take advantage of the holidays as useful cover for the burglaries.

Werner Veith, a spokesman for the Munich police department, said: "Someone running down the street at this time of year in a Santa outfit isn't going to cause much suspicion."

He said that a Father Christmas had stolen more than 100,000 marks from a department store several years ago but was never caught. "With the Santa mask, he just blended right in. We have these sorts of robberies during the Christmas season and during the winter carnival season when many people are on the streets wearing masks and costumes."

But Christmas is not just a time for giving, some unfortunate Santas have been on the receiving end as well.

One Father Christmas who was handing out chocolates in the north-eastern town of Oldenburg was approached by a man who also wanted some. At first the Santa refused but, after arguing reluctantly that it was meant for the children, he gave him a piece. "The man then expressed his gratitude by punching the Santa in the face so hard that he had to be taken to hospital," according to a subsequent newspaper report.

— Kate Watson-Smyth

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NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.

The former West Indies Test cricketer Winston Davis has been paralysed in a freak accident while helping to rebuild a church on his home island in the Caribbean. The 39-year-old fast bowler suffered the same injuries as the actor Christopher Reeve and doctors say he will never walk again.

His case has been taken up by Wyr Forest Labour MP David Lock who is pleading with the Government to waive rules which threaten to bar Mr Davis from coming to live with his English wife Patricia, 38, and their daughter Jessica, 5, in Bewdley, near Worcester, because he would require state support.

Mr Davis played county cricket for Northampton and Glamorgan besides appearing in 15 tests and around 50 one-day internationals.

The accident occurred while Mr Davis was carrying out some voluntary land-clearing work for a new church in St Vincent. He had climbed into a tree to saw off some branches when he was struck by a falling branch from above and fell to the ground.

He was eventually flown to a specialist Ameri-

cian trauma hospital in Palm Beach, Florida, where he spent five weeks on a ventilator and has already clocked up \$650,000 (£490,000) in medical bills.

Mr Davis had been due to leave his Caribbean job as supervisor with a shipping company next spring so he could live with his family in England. He and his wife have been married for seven years.

His application to the British High Commission in New York for entry clearance into Britain is currently being considered. But such an plea would normally be refused because Mr Davis's injuries mean he would inevitably depend on state support.

Mr Lock said: "In normal circumstances it's highly likely such an entry application would be refused. But Winston spent 15 years playing cricket over here providing great entertainment for the public and paying considerable amounts of tax and national insurance. I'm strongly backing his case and I hope a compassionate response from the Government will allow the family to be together in this country."

— Richard Smith

Gucci's former lover loses cruelty appeal

Penny Armstrong, the former lover of the fashion tycoon Paolo Gucci, yesterday had her sentence for causing unnecessary suffering to horses increased after magistrates rejected an appeal.

Ms Armstrong, 38, a former stable girl who has two children by the millionaire, was found guilty of cruelty to 11 Arab horses on Gucci's former stud farm near Crawley, West Sussex, last October.

She was prosecuted by the RSPCA, banned from keeping horses for five years and ordered to pay £5,640 costs and £15,573 compensation.

Magistrates at Chichester Crown Court yesterday rejected her appeal and added an extra four month sus-



pended sentence over each cruelty charge. But she was granted an additional 12 months, on top of the year allowed in October, to pay costs and compensation.

The RSPCA was called to the £2.5m estate last January after lo-

cals saw a collapsed horse in a field. Inspectors discovered several more starving and emaciated horses. Some were so weak they could hardly walk.

David Buck, prosecuting at the court case, said the animals were suffering from diarrhoea and listlessness. One filly had to be put down immediately, a vet estimated that she had not eaten for two weeks. Eleven others were removed to an animal welfare centre for intensive care but six of them failed to recover.

The horses were part of a group of 100 kept at the stud at Rusper. Ms Armstrong had been living in a house associated with the stud.

— Kate Watson-Smyth

Birthday is a treat for statisticians

Ben Oakhill's seventh birthday will be a medical milestone. His celebrations a week today will herald the countdown for an international statistical marathon which will end as the millennium gets under way.

Ben, of Patchway, near Bristol, was the first child of more than 14,000 to take part in the Children of the Nineties – the world's largest study of child health and development.

Based at Bristol University's Institute of Child Health, it has been charting the progress of 14,893 expectant mothers in the former county of Avon through their children's births to their seventh birthdays. The multi-million pound project is the core

of a study also involving Russia, Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Greece and the Isle of Man. It was scheduled to begin in April 1991, but Ben's premature birth – when he weighed 2lb 6oz – in December gave it an early start.

His mother, Margaret, and the other volunteer mothers regularly filled in questionnaires about their lifestyle and health to build a massive database of life and health in the Nineties. Now the research team is planning full medical check-ups of more than 14,000 children at special clinics starting next August, involving more than 100 researchers and support staff. The data should be ready for analysis early in 2000.

2/BRIEFING

UPDATE

COMPUTERS

Heavyweight laptops pose risk

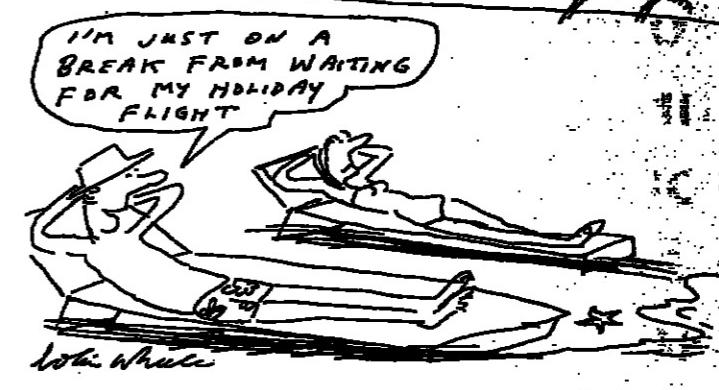
Thousands of professionals who use laptop computers could be risking a wide range of health problems, according to a report published yesterday. Workers who use the equipment regularly report headaches, eye strain and arm pain, public service union Unison found in a survey of careers advisers. The union said careers advisers have to carry equipment weighing around 20lb if they included printers and papers, according to Keith Sonnet, head of local government at Unison.

Mr Sonnet said careers advisers could not be expected to "carry their offices around from place to place". He added: "The only way to avoid injuries is to have personal computers provided in offices, and in the case of careers advisers in schools and colleges. Where this is not a viable option, laptops should only be used after employers have carried out thorough risk assessments."

— Barrie Clement, Labour Editor

TRAVEL

Airport chaos worsens



Delays at British airports are getting worse, with package holiday passengers bearing the brunt of the hold-ups, the latest figures show. Only 51 per cent of charter flights took off or landed on time, or no more than 15 minutes late, in the July-September 1997 period. Of 10 major airports, only Gatwick had lower average delays last summer than in July-September 1996, the Civil Aviation Authority reported. The average summer 1997 delay at the 10 airports was 39 minutes for charter flights and 12 minutes for scheduled flights. This compared with figures of 38 minutes for charters and 10 minutes for scheduled in July-September 1996. A total of 51 per cent of charter flights and 72 per cent of scheduled ones took off on time last summer compared with 52 per cent and 78 per cent respectively in 1996.

The average delay on charter flights at Gatwick in summer 1997 was 50 minutes compared with 54 minutes in summer 1996, while scheduled flight delays at the West Sussex airport fell from 17 minutes to 16 minutes. Of the other airports surveyed, Manchester had the longest average charter flight delays in summer 1997, rising from 34 minutes to 38 minutes. Birmingham airport had the highest percentage of flights on time or no more than 15 minutes late – 82 per cent for scheduled and 65 per cent for charters. But both these figures were down on 1996 ones. Despite an average improvement in delays, Gatwick still had the lowest number (41 per cent) of charter flights on time in July-September 1997.

EDUCATION

Blunkett aims cash at literacy

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, yesterday announced details of £59m funding for education authorities to meet ambitious literacy targets. The Government has guaranteed that by 2002, 80 per cent of 11-year-olds will achieve the level of literacy expected for their age.

In this summer's tests, 63 per cent of 11-year-olds gained the required grades in English, up from 58 per cent last year. But only 57 per cent of 11-year-old boys compared with 69 per cent of girls made the expected grade. This trend was continued for older children, with 66 per cent of girls achieving the expected level or better by the age of 14, compared with 47 per cent for boys. Many authorities have fewer than 40 per cent of pupils at the required standard.

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.46	Italy (lira)	2,837
Austria (schillings)	20.24	Japan (yen)	24,92
Belgium (francs)	59.51	Malta (lira)	0.62
Canada (\$)	2.32	Netherlands (guilders)	3.24
Cyprus (pounds)	0.84	Norway (krone)	11.87
Denmark (kroner)	11.04	Portugal (escudos)	293.21
France (francs)	9.63	Spain (pesetas)	243.22
Germany (marks)	2.88	Sweden (kroner)	12.70
Greece (drachme)	457.26	Switzerland (francs)	2.33
Hong Kong (\$)	12.51	Turkey (lira)	325,378
Ireland (pounds)	1.10	USA (\$)	1.62

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only

by Chris Priestley

ZITS



by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

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SINCE 1846

Straw to reconsider Fayed citizenship request

Mohamed al Fayed, the owner of Harrods and Tory party bête noire, took an important step towards gaining British citizenship yesterday. The move, says Jason Bennett, Crime Correspondent, follows years of campaigning and bitter behind-the-scenes fighting.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, yesterday announced that he was reconsidering the applications for British naturalisation by the millionaire Fayed brothers, Mohamed and Ali. His move follows a decision to quash an on-going challenge, made by the previous Home Secretary, Michael Howard,

against a Court of Appeal ruling that the Egyptian-born brothers' application had been treated unfairly.

Mr Straw also revealed that in future all rejected applicants for British passports will be given reasons why they have been turned down. This is expected to affect between 200 to 300 people each year, most of whom would have been refused for reasons such as criminal convictions, national security risks, or being an unsuitable character. Last year nearly 5,000 people were refused citizenship and told why – mostly because they failed the basic criteria – while 43,000 gained British passports.

On the question of the Fayed brothers, Mr Straw said he would decide their applications "on their merits". Home Office officials will now have to draw up new rec-

ommendations and reports for Mr Straw, who is not allowed to see advice given to previous governments.

While the decision, which is expected to be made in several months, is not a foregone conclusion it is being tipped in favour of the Fayed's.

Mohamed al Fayed yesterday described the announcement as "an important step forward". "Having lived here for more than 30 years and done my best to play a positive part in the life of this country, I should like to share the nationality of my four British children," he said.

Mr Fayed remains a hugely controversial figure because of his role in the "cash-for-questions" affair. His allegations that he paid thousands of pounds stuffed in plain brown envelopes to Tory MPs to ask ques-

tions on his behalf in the House of Commons led to the downfall of former ministers Neil Hamilton and Tim Smith and set off the "Tory sleaze" saga.

All Fayed first applied for citizenship in 1993, followed by his older brother in 1994. Although applications normally take nine months to process it was not until March 1995 that they were told of their rejection. The reason for the refusal appears to go back to 1985, when the brothers won the battle with Loutho's Tiny Rowland for the House of Fraser group, which includes Harrods.

A 1990 Department of Trade and Industry report into the affair described the brothers as liars, in relation to their family background, their early business life and their wealth. However, both the Serious

Fraud Office and the Crown Prosecution Service decided there was insufficient evidence to take action.

By 1994, an angry Mr Fayed, his citizenship application apparently stalled, went public over "cash-for-questions". He later sparked the scandal over a stay at the Paris Ritz hotel by Jonathan Aitken, the former Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

There was also controversy over the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, who died in a Paris car crash with her son, Dodi. Mr Fayed said that a nurse at the hospital where she was treated had passed on her "final words and requests" to him – a claim strongly denied by the hospital.

The brothers contribute millions to the Exchequer and are generous to charities, as well as donating £250,000 to the Tory party.

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT

24-PAGE EYE



How the Teletubbies rule the world (despite the Spice Girls)

Diana: a nation's idolatry

The late, late gift guide

Jumbo crossword

Complete holiday TV

How to turn your home into a star of the movies

Vacating your home for film crews while trying to gear up for Christmas may sound crazy. But, says Clare Gormer, there is good money in this madness.

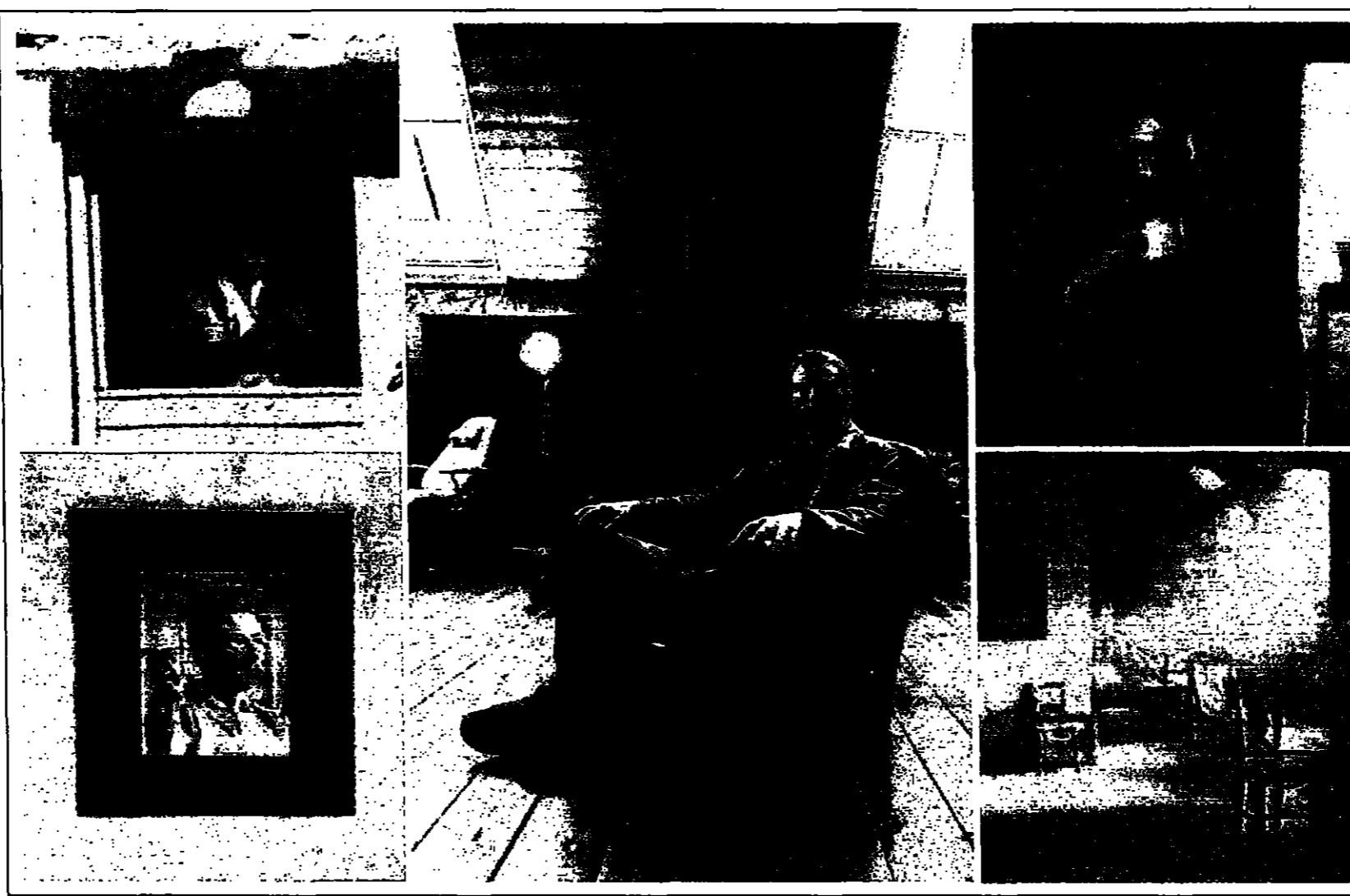
It is the equivalent of a winter Wimbledon. Just as owners of properties in SW19 cash in on the championships, people can make a bonfire by renting out their home to film companies and advertising agencies in the run-up to Christmas.

Getting your house on the books of a locations agency can be a nice little earner whatever the time of year, but for those willing to put up with the inconvenience of lights, cameras and action in December, it will wipe out any seasonal overdraft at a stroke.

There is, of course, a risk that your home won't look quite the same afterwards. Take Caroline Cooper, an interior designer, who let her house in Blackheath, south-east London, to be used as a set for *The Knock* a year ago. "The carpet had to be relaid because fake blood was put all over it when Dennis Waterman was killed on our landing," she said. "Only this week a new carpet was fitted and it still doesn't look right."

But Mrs Cooper is not deterred. Last Friday she was called up by an agency looking for a location for a British Airways advertisement to be filmed this morning. She agreed – and is £400 the richer as a result. "You have to put up with the hassle and inconvenience," she said. "That's what you get paid for ... It's nice to have a little bonus you weren't expecting."

Mrs Cooper's house is called Pagoda and looks very much like one. The Chinese features mean it is in demand about once a month, but there are no set rules about what film companies are looking for. James Lindsay, location manager at Location Works,



In the frame: Tony Ralph in his Clerkenwell loft apartment (Photograph: Tom Pilston). Both owner and location were featured in a Dulux television commercial

said: "Requirements are very varied. We're not always looking for properties like Chatsworth ... Sometimes people come to us and say: 'We're looking for a grubby little semi to shoot something that would be found in a grubby little semi'. It would be no use sending them off to Buckingham Palace."

Size is often the main consideration and unique features – such as peculiar shaped windows, outrageous decor and impressive views – help, too. Fees vary according to the scale of the invasion and the length of time the job takes, but owners can earn up to £1,500-a-day for a feature film. From the film company's point of view it works out far cheaper than hiring a studio and building a set, and the effect is more authentic.

Sometimes the location owners can end up with more than they bargained for. Tony Ralph, a 35-year-old carpenter, registers his loft apartment in Clerkenwell, London, with an agency called Amazing Space. When an advertising agency came to check out his home for a Dulux commercial, it ended up filming not only the location but its owner.

Tiffany Parish, who owns Amazing Space, negotiated royalty and location hire fees for Mr Ralph, who was flown to Spain for four days' filming, as well as acting in his own home. His girlfriend, Sharon, a make-up artist, was signed up to do the hair and make-up – turning what should have been a morning's filming into a triple whammy, totting up more than £4,000.

Memory drugs and oxygen bars: the brave new world that awaits us

In five years' time, might your Christmas shopping be more easily done via your television, hooked up to the Internet? Will you take drugs to help you remember important information? Charles Arthur, Science Editor, asks the futurologists what lies ahead.

Marian Salzman is paid to look into the future, but unlike somewhat cheaper forecasters who gaze into crystal balls, she is interested in really big numbers: the ways in which billions of pounds will be spent in Western society.

Ms Salzman, director of the Brand Futures group at the New York advertising agency Young & Rubicam, studies trends like they were going out of fashion, to find the ones which are coming into fashion.

She was one of the first to predict that oxygen bars – a fad idea which started in Canada and is now being franchised around the world – could catch on. Why? Because it plays to fears about urban pollution, despite doctors' insistence that breathing pure oxygen is no real help. It's the psychological boost that customers like.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

5 years from now

Oxygen bars – offering drinks and gas for the high-speed set
Nutraceuticals – staple foods with added vitamins and minerals
Digital TV with many more channels
Male birth control pills
Remote-control surgery
"E-cash" – electronic cash you can spend on the Internet

10 years from now

Flat-screen wall-size TVs which are also videophones
Animals as organ donors for humans
Artificial womb
Computers and TVs you can instruct by speech
Transnational "families" based on shared interests rather than blood
Pharmaceutical cures for failing memories and energy

Never

The death of television
The paperless office
Virtual war
Legalised human cloning
No more adversarial politics
The end of the road for the petroleum-fuelled car

Next she expects pharmaceutical companies will start realising that people are living longer and want more from chemicals during the rest of their lives. "A drug company usually makes money out of people mostly in their first two years of life and their last two. Now they're realising that there's another 75 years they could be profiting from," Prozanic, the antidepressant now being prescribed in the US even for some under-10s, is just the first in a long wave. Memory-enhancing drugs, behaviour-modifying drugs and similar substances are all being cooked up and tested right now.

Other futurologists are also polishing the predictions for the next decade and beyond. Many focus on the rapid changes that

technologies are bringing. "Wide, flat wall screens will be very commonplace in about 10 years," predicts Ian Pearson, British Telecom's in-house futurologist. "Digital TV is driving that; I think in a while you'll hardly see any normal TVs being sold."

The real change will come in communications. "In 10 years you will be able to talk to the computer, TV and so on, and they will understand you. You'll say 'I want to watch a documentary' and it'll say 'There's one about a polar bear'."

At the London-based Henley Centre, Sian Davies, a director, agrees: "TV will offer more choice in terms of channels, but organisations like the BBC won't be pushed out by it.

Yet some changes aren't inevitable. Despite the repeated wishes for the paperless office, that is never likely to happen, says Pearson. "If paper was invented today it would be hailed as the biggest breakthrough of the 20th century," he said. "There are so many things it's really useful for, that you can't imagine using screens to do."

But Ms Salzman also sees other, deeper forces at work.

She recently moved back to the US from Europe. "When I was in the UK I was amazed by the traditional structures of work and home. Now, back in the States, we now have what we call 24-7 working and living – it's 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We manage our time so that we optimise our productivity."

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Scargill defiant after calls to quit from miners' charity



Arthur Scargill yesterday threatened the Charity Commissioners with legal proceedings after they accused him of misconduct. Barry Clement, Labour Editor, finds the miners' leader insisting that he has always acted in the best interests of his members.

Scargill: Court threat

Cancer survivor tells her story on TV to raise funds

A woman who developed cancer at the age of 25 was so grateful to be cured of the disease that she is to star in the first television commercial to raise funds for cancer research. Jeremy Lawrence, Health Editor, hears her story.

Lynn Holloway was married with a two-year-old daughter when she was diagnosed as having Hodgkin's disease, a cancer of the lymph glands. Almost the first thing the doctors told her was that saving her life might only be achieved at the cost of her fertility.

"I was frightened like everyone else when the big C word was mentioned. But my main worry was whether I would be able to have any more children," she said.

Seven years on, she has defied the odds to give Becky, nine, two brothers - Jordan, five, and Samuel, three. To repay her doctors, she offered to help raise funds and was selected to appear in the Cancer Research Campaign's £70,000 television campaign. The advertisements, which show Becky talking of her fear and joy as her mother finally beats the disease, is to be launched on Boxing Day.

After her diagnosis, Ms Holloway endured a year of chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which required fortnightly stays in hospital and left her feeling

nauseous and wretched. There are between 2,500 and 3,000 cases of Hodgkin's disease each year and 70 per cent are cured but the treatment can have long-term toxic side-effects. As well as infertility, some patients develop other cancers ranging from leukaemia to lung cancer.

"Half-way through the treatment I got very angry. I told everyone to go away and that I had to get on with it myself and no one could help me. I think focusing on having another baby helped me to get better. It kept my mind off me. I was thinking not about dying but about having more children."

Final confirmation of her recovery came when a life-assurance company which had been quoting her a premium five times the normal rate reduced it last year to the standard fee. It meant that mortgages, bank loans and all the burdens that constitute an ordinary existence, and which depend on the guarantee of life assurance, were hers again. Normal life had been resumed. Ms Holloway said: "Everyone thinks if you get cancer you are going to die. It is not true anymore."

The pilot television campaign will run for one month on Sky News, Discovery Channel, Granada Goodlife and The History Channel. A spokeswoman for the Cancer Research Campaign said the cost of running it on the main ITV network would have been too great. The response will be assessed before a decision is taken to repeat the experiment is taken.

After her diagnosis, Ms Holloway endured a year of chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which required fortnightly stays in hospital and left her feeling

The Charity Commissioners yesterday called for the removal of Arthur Scargill from the chairmanship of two coal industry welfare organisations after he was found guilty of misconduct.

After a year-long investigation the commissioners said it was "necessary or desirable" that Mr Scargill and Frank Cave, president and vice-president respectively of the National Union of Mineworkers, should be removed from

their posts with the charities.

Mr Scargill yesterday responded by threatening the commissioners with legal action in the High Court and pointed out that the NUM national executive and annual conference had backed his decisions over the welfare organisations' assets.

NUM officials have until the end of January to contest the decision to remove them from the trustee boards controlling the Yorkshire Miners' Welfare Trust Fund Scheme

and the Yorkshire Miners' Welfare Convalescent Homes.

The investigation by the commissioners followed complaints by two trustees nominated by British Coal, who argued that the transfer of £800,000 from the trust fund to the convalescent homes had been improper.

The two British Coal nominees said the decision had been taken at a meeting where several trustees were absent and that the transfer had failed to

follow the correct procedures.

Mr Scargill's fellow trustees alleged that inaccurate minutes had been presented to meetings of the trust fund scheme's most senior officials.

There is no question that Mr Scargill or Mr Cave profited personally from the transaction. It is thought they were keen to switch the cash to avoid the trust fund becoming involved in "partnership-funded schemes". These were introduced at the time of coal in-

dustry privatisation in 1995.

Mr Scargill and Mr Cave opposed the schemes because they believe that such welfare projects should be funded by the state and management - a position they believe is endorsed by their union's policy.

The commissioners also found that places at the convalescent home run by the charity were "improperly denied" to ex-mineworkers who failed to keep up union membership after taking voluntary redundancy.

The two union officials were suspended from the trusteeship of the charities in June pending the investigation.

Mr Scargill has always insisted that he has acted in the best interests of the two organisations' beneficiaries and that the decisions had been based on the advice of counsel.

He has insisted that the trustees of the fund decided in May 1995 that it was not in the best interests of the trust to accept "partnership funding".

Christina comes twice a

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The nose has it: Anthony Sher preparing to play Cyrano de Bergerac at the Lyric Theatre in London last night. The performance marks the centenary of Edmond Rostand's play in London and Sher joins actors such as Steve Martin (in the film Roxanne), Gerard Depardieu, Sir Derek Jacobi and Robert Lindsay to play the role

Photograph: Tom Pilston

CJD fears for eye transplant patients

Three patients who received eye transplants from a woman who was later found to have had Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease may have to undergo new transplant operations to reduce their risk of infection. Government advisers on CJD have recommended that the donated corneas, given to two patients, and the sclera (white of the eye) given to a third should be removed and replaced with fresh tissue. There are fears that any CJD prions present in the eyes could leach out slowly increasing the risk of transmission of the disease the longer they are in place.

— Jeremy Lawrence, Health Editor

MP plea on murder

Simon Hughes, Lib Dem MP for Southwark and Bermondsey, has joined the father of Jamie Robe, 17, who was murdered on a south London estate, in calling for witnesses to break the "wall of silence" surrounding the police investigation.



Lynn Holloway with her children. She had feared that treatment for Hodgkin's disease would leave her infertile

Libyans will get fair hearing in Lockerbie trial, says UN report

The two Libyans suspected of the Lockerbie bombing would get a fair trial by jury in Scotland, according to a report by the United Nations. It was announced last night.

But despite the apparent backing of the UN the Libyan authorities have no intention of handing over the suspects, say campaigners.

A Lockerbie support group has also cast doubt on the findings of the UN report and have called for the full details to be made public.

The UN legal experts' opinion follows a fact-finding visit to Scotland earlier this month.

A Crown Office spokesman in Edinburgh said: "The Crown Office welcomes the report of the UN legal experts who, contrary to speculative and ill-informed reports, have concluded that the accused would receive a fair trial under the Scottish judicial system.

"We are particularly pleased to hear that they concluded that a trial by jury would not prejudice the accused's right to a free trial.

"Libya should now stop prevaricating and secure the appearance of the accused for trial."

Relatives and campaigners for the 270 people who died in the Am 9800 bomb blast in December 1988 called earlier this week for the Government to allow the trial of the two Libyans to be held in a neutral country.

Tam Dalyell, the Labour MP and Lockerbie campaigner, questioned last night the contents of the UN report and has asked for it to be made available in the Commons. He said there were reports that some members of the UN team were unhappy about a trial in Scotland.

He added that it would not matter "a damn" either way because

the Libyans would not surrender the two suspects to Britain or the United States. Libya has refused to hand them over despite UN sanctions.

The statement from the Crown Office came the day after relatives of the dead organised a press conference in Edinburgh where Mr Dalyell called for the Lord Advocate to step aside from deciding where the suspects should stand trial.

The event on Sunday was staged to mark the ninth anniversary of the tragedy, in which 270 passengers and Lockerbie residents died when a bomb destroyed the airliner.

Among those taking part were the spokesmen for the British relatives, Dr Jim Swire, the Edinburgh University law professor Robert Black, and Dr David Fieldhouse, a GP from Bradford who gave evidence at the fatal accident inquiry.

— Jason Bennett

Schizophrenic jailed for killing

A schizophrenic who had escaped diagnosis for nearly a year killed a neighbour in a knife attack, an Old Bailey court heard yesterday.

Tolga Kurter, 20, was sent to Rampton high security hospital indefinitely after admitting manslaughter while suffering from diminished responsibility. His plea of not guilty to murder was accepted by the court.

While suffering from "bizarre delusions", Kurter had stabbed Nicholas Boyd, a taxi driver, near their homes in north London in April this year — believing his victim was another man.

Holes baffle golfers

A golf course is full of unwanted holes — thanks to a mystery bomber who is aiming for its greens. The bomber has targeted Skipton Golf Course in North Yorkshire up to nine times this year, setting off miniature explosions which cause havoc for greenkeepers.

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5/FAITH

Christmas comes but twice a year

By the weekend, the festive season will merely be a pleasant or uncomfortable memory as millions return to ordinary life. For some Christians, however, Christmas is only just looming on a distant horizon. Steve Cowshaw meets some of the not-yet-Christmassers.

Tomorrow is Christmas Eve. Right? Well, sort of. For some, Christmas does not arrive for another fortnight. For them, there is a kind of double vision, as everything closes down for the Western Christmas, and then opens up again - while Christmas preparations are still under way.

At the Russian cathedral church in South Kensington, they have only just got past St Nicholas's Day - the original Santa Claus day, in early December.

The air has been filled with incense and medieval chanting, in recent days. The day after tomorrow, however, the church will be as closed as your local supermarket. Why have special services on the day that the congregation regards as Thursday 12 December?

The Russians will celebrate

New Year in tandem with everybody else - if rather more vigorously.

Vodka tends to flow generously. Christmas comes later, on 7 January. *Kupya* - a rich dessert made of wheat, honey and poppyseed - will be eaten. But, for the Russians at least, there is little of the traditional British feasting at Christmas.

For many of the Russian churchgoers, the obvious mass-marketing of the Western Christmas is baffling and disturbing.

"Our Christmas is more spiritual. This is more commercial," says one of the cathedral congregants.

Not that the Russian church is entirely oblivious to modern commercial life - a notice instructs you, as you enter: "Please switch off mobile phone before entering cathedral."

Serbs - brothers in the Orthodox faith - also see Western Christmas as a fortnight premature.

At the Serbian church in Ladbroke Grove, West London, icons cover the walls of a building that used to belong to the Church of England until the 1950s. In one corner, the priest is blessing special home-made loaves, the *slavski kolac*, which are specially made for St Nicholas's Day.

For some at the Serb service, there is a sense of double iden-



Extended season: A priest blessing the bread during Advent celebrations at the Serbian church in Ladbroke Grove, west London

Photograph: Rui Xavier

tity - they boast a native London accent, with Serb values attached. Most regard the delayed Christmas as a kind of bonus.

"On 25 December, I sit back and watch some good TV," says Milan Jankovic. "This way, I feel like I get two Christmases. I was made in England, you know."

His friend Novak agrees: "We reap the benefits of both."

When it comes to the Serbian Christmas meal, a mere turkey with trimmings seems modest by comparison.

Christmas Eve is reserved for fish and potato salad. But for

Christmas Day, a pig or

lamb is roasted on the spit.

Ukrainians, too, count the days differently. Of the Orthodox Christians, only the Greeks are already preparing for Christmas Eve tomorrow.

The disjunction stems from the different calendars that are still in use in the Orthodox

church. The West follows the Gregorian calendar, proclaimed by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. Britain joined in a couple of centuries later.

Russia, meanwhile, stuck to the Julian calendar (named after Julius Caesar). Russia did not abolish the Julian calendar

until after the 1917 revolution. Even then, the church remained firmly in the Julian camp; in effect, the new calendar was seen as a Bolshevik invention.

In some respects, the confusion is still there.

The anniversary of the Oc-

tober Revolution falls in November. Meanwhile, 7 January is - after years of being ignored - celebrated as a Russian national holiday.

Old and new are mixed and matched. And Russians and foreigners can wish happy Christmas twice.

Britons turning to Buddhism for fulfilment

By Clare Gumer

Dalai Lama and the big screen treatment of Buddhism - *Seven Years in Tibet* this year and Martin Scorsese's *Kundun* early next - has consolidated Buddhism's reputation as the most fashionable option on the spiritual market.

Stephen Batchelor, author of *Buddhism Without Beliefs - A Contemporary Guide To Awakening*, published in Britain earlier this month, regards the "trendification" of Buddhism as a mixed blessing.

"There is a danger that Buddhism will become reduced to a set of efficacious techniques," he said. "In the West, we are particularly liable to treat it as a spiritual technology, which is a gross simplification. Buddhism is a fairly complicated phenomenon."

This is a poignant symbol of the way Buddhism is quietly transplanting mainstream religion in this country. Retreat centres are starting to burst at the seams and private individuals are deciding to fast, not feast, this Christmas.

The celebrity endorsements, the enormous popularity of the

waiting list. Mr Batchelor will himself be enjoying a traditional French Christmas - "very indulgent and good fun" - before launching himself into asceticism, but other Buddhists, such as Mary-Jayne Rust, 41, a Jungian analyst, and her management consultant partner, Adrian Henriques, 44, plan to

do a sponsored fast from Christmas Eve to Christmas night in aid of a school in Ladakh. "I'm tired of the old routine," said Ms Rust, who has in the past enjoyed traditional Christmases. "I've got to the point when I feel there has to be a different way of doing this. Recently I've felt more and

more strongly that there's an environmental crisis. The more uncertain our future becomes the more it seems to me people in the West get addicted to consuming material things. Something has got to stop somewhere. To fast at Christmas is a way of making a statement." Among the other retreats on

offer this year is that of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order at Sibford in Oxfordshire. It lasts from 23 December for 10 days. There is no fasting and the focus is on teaching and practising meditation. It is aimed at relative newcomers, who don't have to be Buddhist and so far, 48 people are going.



Adrian Henriques: Fasting

Photograph: John Lawrence

Catholic anger as Irish president takes Protestant communion

BY DAVID MCKITTRICK

Some days ago a man wrote to a Belfast newspaper accusing a woman of embarrassing the Catholic church and of having "a liberal, do-it-yourself, 'two fingers up to the bishops' agenda". The man is Father James McEvoy, professor of philosophy at Maynooth; the woman is the president of Ireland. Our Ireland Correspondent reports on some extraordinary happenings in church-state relations in Ireland.

When Mary McAleese was elected President of Ireland last month many had pigeon-holed her as a right-wing conservative Catholic who could be expected to follow the rules of her church. But already she has plunged into the business of demonstrating that being devout is not the same as being orthodox.

She made the move which enraged Maynooth, a leading seminary, on the morning of Sunday, 7 December in Christ Church, one of Dublin's two Protestant cathedrals, when she rose in her

pew, looked meaningfully at the watching media, and took Communion from a member of the Church of Ireland.

The first northerner to become president, Mrs McAleese had been accused during the election campaign of insensitivity towards Protestants. Since she had countered that she wanted her presidency to be about bridge-building, her action in Christ Church could be viewed as a practical demonstration of that aspiration.

Her gesture provoked no immediate outcry: Catholics do not normally take Communion in Protestant churches, but most who took any notice of the event viewed it as a welcome ecumenical gesture.

But then some muted early rumblings of disapproval within the Catholic church erupted into open criticism. The hierarchy met and, while emphasising that it did not wish to censure or embarrass the president or damage ecumenical relations, it let it be known that what the president had done was contrary to Canon Law.

Father McEvoy, however,

tended no disrespect, but his choice of words certainly deepened the controversy.

The fact that the issue has flared up in this way has raised deep questions, most particularly about the parameters of the presidency and the authority of the Catholic church. Mrs McAleese, as a prominent lay Catholic, once chaired an inter-church committee which considered the Communion issue, and was therefore well aware that her action would not find favour with the bishops.

But then she has not been an admirer of the Irish hierarchy, having described it as "a shabby bleak procession of Pontius Pilate lookalikes, abusing priests, disinterested abbots and impotent cardinals".

She clearly knew that taking Communion in a Protestant cathedral was the equivalent of throwing down the gauntlet to the hierarchy.

Certainly Fr McEvoy's comments have the ring of a man who believes the McAleese presidency is going to be one of direct challenge to the Church. At this early stage the president has public opinion on her side, for in an opinion poll she won 78 per cent support. The signs are that most Irish Catholics approve of bridge-building and believe the hierarchy is out of touch.

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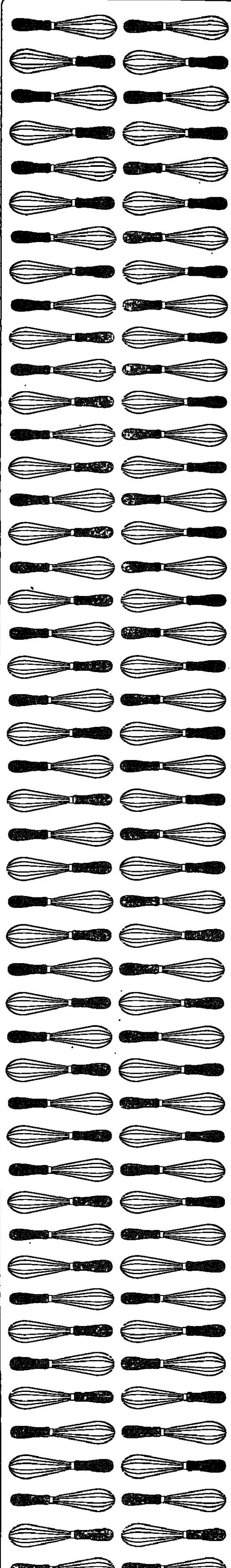
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Race bias is rife at heart of government

Racial discrimination and harassment are rife in the Home Office, the government department responsible for race relations, according to an internal report. Fran Abrams, Political Correspondent, says the Government is determined to tackle the problem.

Four out of 10 black and Asian civil servants in the Home Office feel disadvantaged or discriminated against because of

their race, according to a survey of 2,700 staff released to the Liberal Democrats. One in seven say that they have suffered harassment during the last year.

The revelation of continuing discrimination at the heart of government has disturbed ministers. Although several ministers have promised to tackle the problem in their own departments, the Commission for Racial Equality believes that it exists across Whitehall.

Although the Home Office is the only department to release a survey, the Labour MP Keith Vaz said in a report published two months ago that the Home Office, Foreign and Common-

wealth Office and Treasury had no black or Asian people in the top six grades.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, has promised to take action by holding recruitment open days and has complained that the higher echelons of his department are "very white and very male".

There are only 190 ethnic minority Britons among 5,900 diplomats, and none of them is in senior management.

Across the board, there are only two black or Asian people in the top four grades of the civil service and only 58 among the top 3,000 policy-makers.

The Home Office report,

published in response to a written parliamentary question from the Liberal Democrats, said 54 per cent of black staff and 63 per cent of Asians were at administrative officer grade or below, compared with 23 per cent of white staff. Ethnic minority staff also tended to be younger.

"There is a fairly widespread feeling among black and Asian staff that they are discriminated against on account of their race," the report said.

"Furthermore, black staff in particular and Asian staff to some extent often display less positive views about their job than other staff. They tend to

enjoy their job less than others and are less likely than white staff to feel that there is variety in their work or that it is interesting."

The Cabinet Office is reviewing all departments' programmes on race equality, and will report on their progress in the spring. A spokesman for the Commission for Racial Equality said that its advice, which had been sought by Mr Straw and Mr Cook, would be the same as it gave to every major employer - to examine every aspect of their work from recruitment to training and to try to eliminate possible bias.

Richard Allan, the Liberal

Democrats' community affairs spokesman, said: "It is a matter of great concern that there is such a strong feeling of discrimination and harassment at the heart of government. There is no reason to believe that these problems are unique to the Home Office."

Mr Vaz said that Mr Straw had written to him after the publication of his report to underline his commitment to equality.

"We have a long way to go but obviously the best way forward is to ensure that if there are allegations of racism that they are inspected as quickly as possible and dealt with," he said.

Blair puts case for cutting benefits

Twelve people were arrested yesterday after demonstrators protesting at proposed cuts in disability benefits threw red paint over the Downing Street gates. Meanwhile, Fran Abrams reports, the Prime Minister explained how the plans fitted in with his Christian beliefs.

Disability rights campaigners chanted "Tony, Tony, Shame on you!" and daubed the words "Blair's Blood" on the pavement outside Downing Street.

The Prime Minister was not at home, though. He was attending a number of events in and near his constituency, including a visit to Durham Cathedral.

While there, he told reporters it was "nonsense" to suggest that his own Christian beliefs clashed with the need to tighten up on social security benefits.

"What we have got to do is make sure those people who are genuinely in need get the help they want because the system at the moment is failing them," he said.

"We need to reform a system that is leaving more people in poverty and yet we are seeing bills rise and rise and rise and rise so that we are spending, as I have been saying to people, more money on our social security benefits than on our schools, hospitals and police together."

The protest, organised by the Disabled People's Direct Action Network, led to the gates at the front of Downing Street being blocked off.

At the same time as the Downing Street protest, the National Federation of the Blind of the UK launched a "Scrooge" campaign to protect disabled people's benefits and rights.

In a statement, the federation said: "All disabled people would like the opportunity to work and be off benefits."

A leaked memo from David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, at the weekend showed the extent of cabinet dissent on the issue. John Prescott, Frank Dobson, Clare Short and Robin Cook are also believed to be unhappy about the detail of some of the proposed cuts, which could involve taxing or means-testing disability benefits.

The shadow Chancellor and former secretary of state for social security Peter Lilley claimed that Labour was seeking simply to make cuts rather than weed out those who should not be claiming.

"They are actually going to cut the money for disabled people. We believe you should not cut the amount going to individual disabled people, but that you should try to stop it going to people who are not genuinely disabled or could be helped back into work," he said.

It was reported last night that official figures due for publication next month would show 40 per cent of disability benefits went to people on above-average incomes. Ten billion pounds of the total £23.5bn was paid to above-average earners, while £3.5bn went to the top 25 per cent. However, a Department of Social Security official suggested the true position might have been exaggerated.



Blood money: A paint-daubed protester outside Downing Street yesterday. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Disability militants take fight to the seat of power

The dozen protesters arrested by police yesterday after chaining themselves to the Downing Street gates have close links to the Disabled People's Direct Action Network.

The network (known as Dan) is the most radical, visible, publicity-seeking part of Britain's disability movement. It was Dan that was responsible for trying to turn the debate into a civil rights debate and Dan that first brought to prominence the "Piss on Pity" badges. Other actions organised by Dan have involved disabled people handcuffing themselves to buses in order to disrupt London traffic.

In 1994, in the wake of the admission by Nicholas Scott, minister for the disabled, that his department had drafted the 80-odd amendments that led to the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill being talked out of Parliament, an action was organised at the Palace of Westminster.

It is not the first time that Dan has clashed with the Labour Party. Last year, activists invaded John Smith House and spent six hours there because they said Labour's spokesman for the disabled had refused to assure them that a Labour government would enshrine new rights for the disabled.

One of the yesterday's protesters was Jane Campbell, a long-time campaigner for disabled people's rights who has recently been appointed to the government task force on civil rights for the disabled. She said that the Government should not be attacking benefits which enabled disabled people to be "participating citizens".

"We are not needy, we are not burdens," she said. "How can we have civil rights if our benefits are taken away, the benefits which get us out of bed in the morning." Without them she said that she would not be able to participate in politics or the social process.

Sue Elsegood, 30, from Greenwich, south-east London, is studying for a counselling qualification. She claims that her disability living allowance would be under threat by any government reforms of the welfare system and said that she would not be able to pay for her 24-hour home help or run her specially-adapted car.

She added that without the benefits she claims at the moment, she would not be able to get up in the morning and get to work.

"I have got no choice. If I do not protest about this, I will be left with nothing. Cutting the disability living allowance will mean it will be very difficult for me because I have a lot of expenses as a disabled person."

Suzanne Bull, 27, from Essex, who suffers from spina bifida, said: "I voted for Labour in the election but I will never vote for them again if this is what they are going to do. A lot of us here today cannot believe what has happened. First it was lone parents, now it is disabled people. All the people here today believe this is the start of a long campaign which we intend to win. Disabled people need these benefits and they are given these benefits for a reason."

Kevin Donnellon, 35, from Liverpool, a thalidomide victim, said: "I feel that the Government are picking on us as soft targets, but we are going to show them that we are not soft targets."

— Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

Ulster Unionist split exposed as MPs oppose peace talks

Signs of a potentially damaging split in the ranks of the Ulster Unionists have emerged, with four of the party's 10 MPs declaring their opposition to the Stormont talks. David McKittrick, Ireland Correspondent, reports.

The development, while not considered fatal to the party's participation in talks, is

nonetheless seen as a potentially ominous sign of dissent within the party's most senior ranks.

The party leader, David Trimble, who in September led the party into talks in the same building as Sinn Fein, has regularly given pessimistic assessments about the prospect of agreement there. But he clearly favours their continuation and can be expected to resist the pressure to pull out.

The expression of anti-talks feeling follows threats to withdraw from Stormont emanating from the smaller Progressive

Unionist party, which complains that "the British government have courted the IRA but they have not done anything for us". PUP representatives last night met the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, in Belfast, to press for accelerated releases of loyalist prisoners.

The four Unionist MPs who advocate withdrawal from the talks are William Ross, William Thompson, Roy Beggs and Clifford Forsythe. None of them is regarded as being among the party's front-line leadership

and none is a member of the party's team.

They have however received a measure of support from another MP, Jeffrey Donaldson, an important member of the talks team, who said that he would suggest reviewing participation in the talks unless the government deviated from what he described as a steady stream of concessions to republicans.

A letter from the four MPs was sent to the party's chief whip, the Rev Martin Smyth MP. The 11-strong parliamentary party, while clearly an im-

portant organ, shares power and influence within the party with the Ulsterist council, the executive and the talks team.

● Some of the IRA's most notorious bombers are among 161 inmates leaving Northern Ireland's Maze prison on Christmas home leave today in a move which has outraged victims.

Paul Kavanagh and Thomas Quigley, who were convicted of the bombing of Chelsea barracks, and Brighton bomber Patrick Magee are among the prisoners who have been granted 10 days leave to spend with



7/BEEF'S FUTURE

£85m rescue buys time for farmers

Britain's beef farmers won an £85m emergency support package from the Government last night after their campaign of lobbying, port picketing and protest. But, say Nicholas Schoon and Stephen Goodwin, farmers face an uncertain future.

Big changes are coming to British beef farming. Jack Cunningham, the Minister of Agriculture, told the Commons yesterday. He is looking to set up an early retirement scheme, and insists their subsidies will be cut.

But in the same statement he announced an extra £85m to help them over the coming year after they suffered a huge drop in income in 1997. This was mainly due to the strong pound, with the BSE crisis a lesser factor.

There was over-supply of beef throughout Europe and a long-term decline in sales, he said. Furthermore, as BSE was eliminated from cattle herds in the United Kingdom the special compensation farmers had received from taxpayers to help them cope with the economic impact of the disease would disappear.

The great bulk of subsidy for beef farmers and others are agreed collectively by Europe's farm ministers as part of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy. Britain has

limited scope to cut subsidies unilaterally; if it did so it would be disadvantaging its own farmers compared to their European counterparts.

Britain under both Tory and Labour governments has argued strongly for major reform of the CAP and big subsidy cuts. But the UK has trouble finding support among other European governments, who are much more relaxed about featherbedding farming.

But Mr Cunningham does have discretion with the special extra payments made to hill farmers to support their livestock rearing on poorer land in a harsher environment - the Hill Livestock Compensation Allowance. He also has discretion over the amount of money they are granted to compensate them for a strong pound, which makes beef imports cheaper and depresses market prices.

Yesterday's statement was a clear signal that while he was increasing both in the short term, he would cut them significantly in the next few years - with the option of early retirement for farmers who feel they could not cope. The National Farmers' Union said a retirement package had been a "long-term aim" and it was ready to discuss a scheme with ministers.

William Jenkins, a South Wales hill farmer, said traditional hill farmers could no longer hope to make a profit from rearing calves and lambs and selling them in the autumn. "We have people in our area

who are in serious financial trouble and quite frankly this package is not going to get them out of it," Mr Jenkins said. He favoured gearing support more towards protecting the environment.

The extra help will mean about £37 per suckler cow, worth about £800 to an average lowland suckler cow producer with 22 cows, and £1,400 to an average hill farmer with 38 cows. In addition, hill farmers will get an additional payment of £10 - £11 per cow and approximately £1 per breeding ewe.

Stephen Rossides, head of the NFU's livestock department, said Mr Cunningham had brought to a head the need for farm policy across Europe to become more market-oriented with food prices brought down to world levels.



Crowded market: Farmers face an over-supply of beef and a long-term decline in sales

Photograph: Peter Cook

Missing witnesses weaken inquiry

The inquiry into BSE was announced yesterday - but it may be a damp squib unless it can call witnesses from the civil service. Charles Arthur, Science Editor, asks what value an examination without witnesses would be.

The Government yesterday announced its long-awaited inquiry into the BSE crisis and the consequent deaths of more than 20 Britons - but gave it less than the full powers that observers had been hoping for.

Jack Cunningham, the agriculture minister, told the House of Commons that Lord Justice Phillips, an appeal court judge, would head an "independent inquiry" which would report back within a year.

The terms of reference means Lord Justice Phillips will have less ability to demand witnesses than Lord Justice Scott did when he led the inquiry into the sale of arms to Iraq. The terms also fall far short of those available under a full judicial inquiry made under the 1921 Act, which would allow him to subpoena witnesses, who would have to give evidence under oath. In fact it

may be impossible to interview key witnesses. The Government has said that it will not give evidence. Yet many of the decisions on beef and BSE were made within government.

However, last night nobody could clarify whether this only applies to present government ministers, or whether working civil servants - such as the Chief Veterinary Officer, Keith Meldrum, who presided over the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food throughout the BSE crisis - would also be exempt.

David Body, a solicitor rep-

resenting families whose rela-

tives have died of BSE-induced

CJD, said: "I would want to

know that any government em-

ployee could give evidence with-

out hesitation or fear that it

would affect their employment.

I'm just concerned that every-

body who has something to say

can say it."

The sweep of the inquiry will

take in almost two decades,

stretching from the "history

and emergence" of BSE, and

the action taken in response, up

to March 1996 when the former

Conservative government an-

nounced that the deaths of a

score of young people from "

new variant" Creutzfeldt-

Jakob Disease (v-CJD) was

"almost certainly" caused by

exposure to BSE.

DAILY POEM**I Sing of a Maiden**

(Anon 14th-century carol)

*I sing of a maiden
That is makeless;
King of all kings
To her son she ches.*

*He came all so still
Where his mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on the grass.*

*He came all so still
To his mother's baw,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flower.*

*Mother and maiden
Was never none but she;
Well may such a lady
Beodes mother be.*

This week's poems come from *The Faber Book of Christmas*. Simon Rae's wide-ranging anthology of poetry and prose on all aspects of the season: sacred and secular, pro and con, at home and abroad (Faber & Faber, £9.99).

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Addict doctors urged to seek treatment

More and more doctors, dentists and nurses are becoming addicted to the drugs prescribed for patients. Ian Burrell discovers that a special rehabilitation centre has been set up to deal exclusively with medical addicts.

The British Medical Association yesterday appealed to doctors who were experiencing problems with alcohol and drugs to seek treatment without fear of reprimand.

Some general practitioners

have a penchant for di-morphine, as they like to call their heroin. Dentists can have a weakness for nitrous oxide, the laughing gas used to knock out patients before especially painful treatment. For pharmacists, the drug of choice tends to be codeine, a hypnotic opiate that they are not required to account for. Nurses are prone to secreting supplies of benzodiazepines - tranquilisers

The unique position of health professionals in having easy access to drugs puts them at high risk of developing a dependency which can wreck their careers and families. The problem has now been recognised to the extent that a rehabilitation centre

to deal exclusively with health professionals suffering from substance abuse, the Foxleigh Grove Chemical Dependency Centre, has been set up near Maidenhead in Berkshire.

Earlier this year the BMA, along with the General Medical Council and the royal colleges, set up a working party on the misuse of alcohol and other drugs. Next month it will issue its first report, with recommendations on how the health professions should deal with addiction within their own ranks.

Dr Bill O'Neill, science and ethics adviser to the BMA, said:

"We want to encourage people to come forward and acknowledge that they have a problem

and ask for help without their career being destroyed. Our ultimate concern is for the welfare of patients but the starting point has got to be to identify doctors who may have a problem before any harm is done."

Last year Clive Froggett, 48, a family doctor who was a confidant of four successive health secretaries, admitted that he had a heroin addiction and offences for possession of the drug. A former Tory councillor who was brought in to advise on health reforms after meeting the then prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, he was dismissed from the medical register in March 1996 after being given a 12-month suspended sentence.

Some estimates submitted to the BMA have suggested that up to 14,000 doctors have alcohol or drug addiction problems, although accurate assessment of the scale of the problem is extremely difficult.

Several dentists have become addicted to the anaesthetic nitrous oxide, a fast-acting psychedelic drug which leaves no tell-tale smells but can have long-term neurophysiological effects. There is also concern over the use of cannabis by medical students because the drug is believed to inhibit fine movement, which is especially crucial in dentistry.

Among the population at large, between 10 and 15 per

cent are thought to have the type of personality which puts them at risk of addiction. Many doctors say they start taking drugs for experimental reasons, driven by professional curiosity.

Medical colleges are seen as breeding grounds for later alcoholism and deans are being encouraged to make greater efforts to include warnings on the potential dangers of psychoactive substances in the curriculum.

• Health professionals seeking help for an addiction problem can call Sick Doctors Trust 01252 345163; Pharmacists Helpline 01628 70243; Dentists Helpline 01628 770242; Anaesthetists Helpline 0171-631 1650.

*Express
relief
from the
pain of
trapped
wind
without
causing
embarrassment*



Place of safety: Joe Mee, a one-time alcoholic dentist and now a helper at the Foxleigh Grove clinic for health professionals in Berkshire

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Clinic offers safe haven for medics

In the Berkshire countryside, a rehabilitation centre has been set up to deal exclusively with health professionals suffering from substance addiction.

The Foxleigh Grove Chemical Dependency Centre, near Maidenhead, provides an environment in which doctors can be treated without the risk of later being blackmailed by fellow patients who threaten to expose them if they do not supply them with drugs. They are guaranteed anonymity because all support the principles of the Hippocratic oath.

Larry O'Connor, the centre's director, said: "In Foxleigh Grove you are not alone. You can see there are other people like you and it makes the shame bearable and engenders a sense of hope that things can change."

Surrounded by their peers, the doctors can focus on their own condition. Such an environment is conducive to allowing them to come out of a state of denial and to accept that they need help.

Foxleigh Grove has a remarkable record, with 89 per cent of the 130 health professionals so far treated avoiding relapse. At some rehabilitation units, patients have only an even chance of success.

Malcolm (not his real name), a pharmacist based on the south coast, has recently completed the Foxleigh programme in an effort to overcome a 17-year dependency on benzodiazepines. At times he would go into work only to get access to tablets. "I was taking them in handfuls. It was all my life consisted of," he said.

Malcolm sought treatment after realising that he could no longer remember what he had prescribed, and suffered sleepless nights worrying about what he had dispensed. He has now been free of the pills for a year and is back at work. "I didn't think I would ever come off them. Now I feel wonderful, but so ashamed of what I did."

The Foxleigh programme lasts for 35 days and demands total abstinence. For most patients, detoxification is achieved within five to seven days and the rest of the programme is based on counselling and group therapy.

Patients are encouraged to participate in physiotherapy and aromatherapy. They are then offered after-programme treatment and encouraged to join Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous.

Among the helpers at Foxleigh Grove is Joe Mee, a one-time alcoholic dentist, who is able to reassure other health professionals that they can overcome their dependency and continue their career.

Michael, a surgeon, was forced to give up work after 10 years of alcohol problems. Last month he was appointed to a new consultant surgical position after successful treatment at Foxleigh Grove. He said that his new employers were aware of his drink history. Now 53, he hopes to work for another 10 years. "Without the treatment I would never have worked again and certainly would have lost my family. I would probably be in a bedsit by now on the SS [social security]."

— Ian Burrell

SOMETIMES
IT'S EASIER
TO TALK
TO SOMEONE
YOU
DON'T LIKE.



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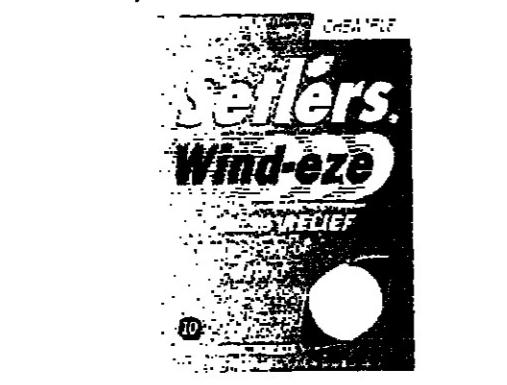
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9/WORLD NEWS

Britain and France thrash out 'moral' arms code

Britain and France, Europe's largest arms exporters, are discussing an EU-wide code of conduct for 'moral' arms sales. John Lichfield reports.

In the original form proposed by Britain, the code was simple enough. If any EU state refused to export weapons for moral or humanitarian reasons, all other EU countries would also refuse.

The idea has been discussed first with France, in the hope of producing a draft agreement which could be presented to other European countries during Britain's presidency of the EU in the first half of next year. If Britain and France – the second and third largest arms exporters in the world – can agree a form of words, it is expected that the others will follow easily enough.

But can Britain and France agree? The newspaper *Liberation* reported yesterday that the negotiations were in trouble: France was seeking to impose so many con-

ditions that the code would become meaningless.

Both British and French sources denied this version of events. They said that detailed negotiations were in progress. Several drafts had been discussed. Both sides hoped to agree a text soon.

British officials said that the French government was being "rather co-operative". There was some difficulty in getting the various agencies of the French government involved in arms sales to take a common line. But London is still confident that an

agreement will be reached early next year.

Britain and France are by far the largest arms exporters in the EU and often in competition for contracts, especially in the Middle East. In 1996, Britain exported military equipment worth \$8.8bn (£5.4bn) – 22.1 per cent of the world market, and France sold arms worth \$5.6bn (£3.7bn) – 14.1 per cent of the market. The only other EU arms exporters of a significant size are Sweden and Belgium.

Labour promised during the election campaign last April that, if it was elected,

it would ban arms sales to countries with an aggressive foreign policy or poor internal human rights record. Mr Cook is anxious to ensure that such a policy does not simply export jobs from Britain to the Continent.

The idea of an EU code of conduct was discussed enthusiastically by Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, and Lionel Jospin, the French Prime Minister, at the Franco-British summit in London last month. But the first draft submitted by Britain to French officials was rejected as too sweeping.

France wants to ensure that the defin-

ition of moral grounds for banning arms sales does not become too broad. According to *Liberation*, Paris fears that, once an EU code was in force, the more pacifist, non-arms producing countries, such as Denmark or Portugal, could try to impose impossible strict conditions on all arms exports.

Paris also wants to find some way of ensuring that arms contracts refused by the EU are not simply snapped up by the United States, the world's largest arms exporter.

Eurofighter agreement, page 10

Clinton flies in to Sarajevo

President Bill Clinton paid a flying visit to Bosnia yesterday and told people in Sarajevo and their leaders that the prospects for peace lay in their hands.

Addressing an audience in the city's national theatre, he said: "In the end the future is up to you, not to the Americans, not to the Europeans and not to anybody else."

Mr Clinton had earlier met the three members of Bosnia's collective presidency, Alija Izetbegovic, Kresimir Zubak and Momcilo Krajišnik, and reminded them of their obligations under the two-year-old Dayton peace accords. Alluding to continuing difficulties over fulfilment of the accords, especially in forging common political institutions and the return of refugees, he said: "Those who rise to that responsibility will have the full support of the United States and the international community. Those who shirk it will isolate themselves."

Mr Clinton went on from Sarajevo to the north-eastern city of Tuzla, where he extended Christmas greetings to some of the 8,500 US troops serving with the Nato-led Stabilisation force (S-For) and thanked them for their contribution. In Washington last week Mr Clinton had announced that US troops would be remaining in Bosnia beyond the Congress-approved deadline of next June, and that no new date would be set for their withdrawal.

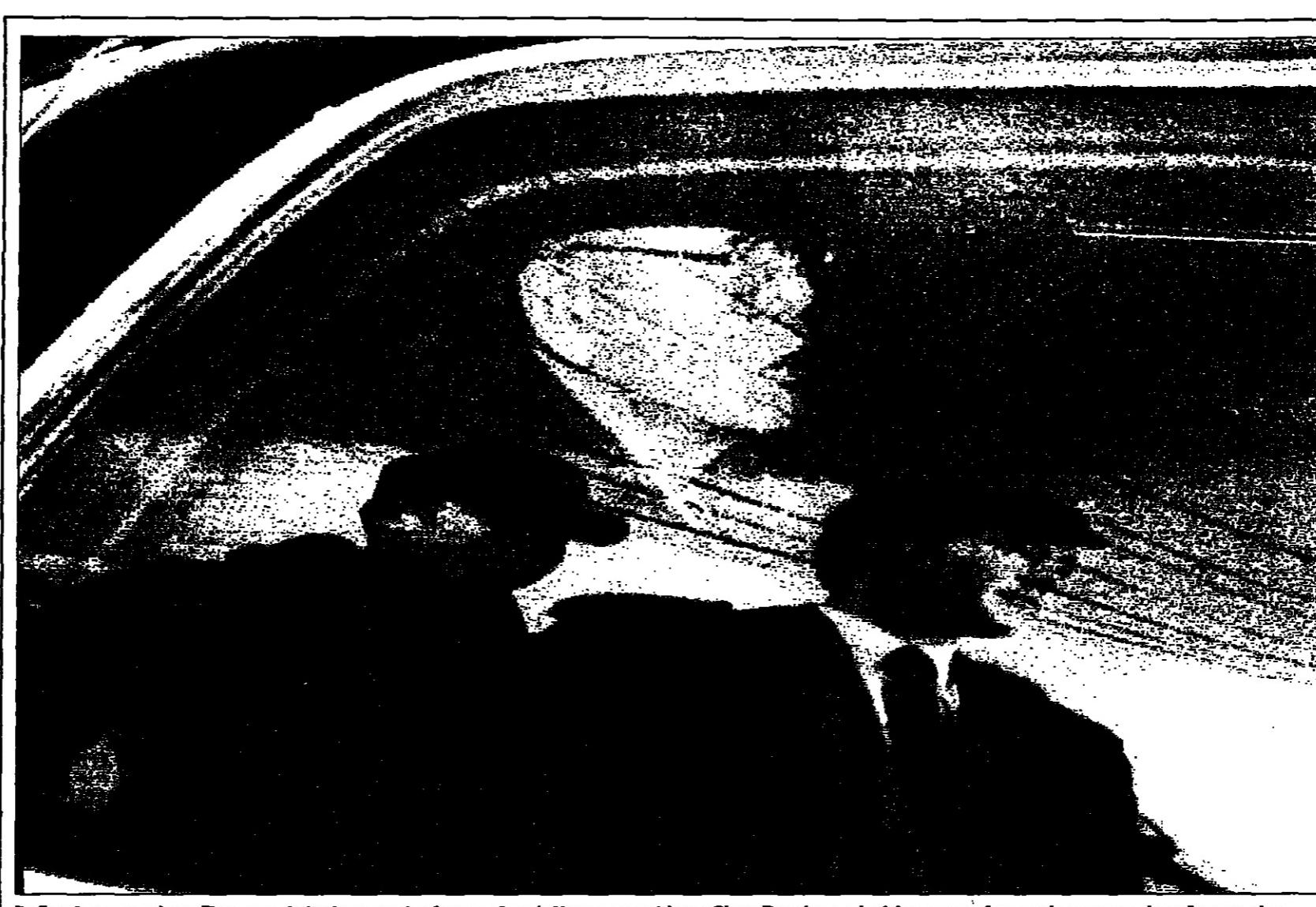
The troops in Tuzla were also addressed briefly by Robert Dole, last year's losing presidential candidate, who is a war hero himself and had long contested the realism of the June deadline. In a political masterstroke, Mr Clinton had invited Mr Dole and his wife, Elizabeth, who is head of the American Red Cross, to accompany him to Bosnia, giving the visit a pointedly bipartisan character. Extending the mandate of US troops, effectively for an indefinite period, is likely to face strong opposition from some Republicans in Congress when it is put to a vote early next year.

• An ally of the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, was proclaimed the winner yesterday in Serbia's presidential elections, described by foreign monitors as "fundamentally flawed". The losing candidate called the vote fraudulent and said he might challenge the results.

The Serbian Electoral Commission said that with about 96 per cent of the votes counted, Mr Milosevic's protégé, Milan Miltutinovic, won 58 per cent while ultra-nationalist Vojislav Seselj had 38 per cent.

The commission said the turnout was 50.53 per cent, just above the 50 per cent minimum to make the election valid. But Mr Seselj's spokesman asserted that the turnout at 97.29 per cent of polling stations was 49.21 per cent. Mr Seselj said that Mr Milosevic's neo-communists rigged the elections by stuffing ballot boxes with false ethnic Albanian votes in Kosovo.

— Mary Dejevsky, Washington Letters, page 14



Reflections on crime: Two guards look on as the former South Korean president, Chun Doo-hwan, is driven away from prison yesterday after serving little more than a year of his life sentence for treason, mutiny and corruption

Photograph: Paul Baker/Reuters

Chechnya returns to haunt Yeltsin

When – or, rather, if – Boris Yeltsin fulfils his stated intention of returning to work in the Kremlin this afternoon after nearly a fortnight off sick, he will find an all-too-familiar problem sitting in his in-tray: trouble brewing in Chechnya.

Tensions in the Caucasus have risen sharply after scores of armed fighters attacked a Russian tank battalion in the republic of Dagestan, seized six hostages, and reportedly torched several vehicles. The two-hour gun battle was one of the most serious outbreaks of violence in the region for some months. It happened near Buynaksk, 30 miles from the republic's border with Chechnya.

The assault came after two detectives from Scotland Yard returned to Moscow after a brief visit to the region to try to negotiate the freedom of the British hostages, Jon James and Camilla Carr, who were abducted in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, more than five months ago.

Mr Yeltsin plans to visit the region early next year. Chechnya's president, Aslan Maskhadov, has said he would meet Mr Yeltsin only to discuss the republic's full sovereignty.

Phil Reeves, Moscow

US approves first anti-baldness pill

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the first pill to fight baldness, a once-a-day tablet that promises to help men regrow hair and prevent more falling out. Merck-and-Co said that Propecia would be available on prescription in the US by mid-January. The company estimates that consumers will pay \$45.49 (£29.30) for a month's supply.

Propecia is not a miracle pill – none of the hundreds of men who tested the drug grew a full head of hair and not all were even helped. But before-and-after photographs showed that Propecia can shrink bald spots, a few by enough that just a quarter-sized spot of scalp still showed.

There are 40 million balding American men and many who now spend \$15-30 a month on non-prescription preparations may now turn to the new drug for help. Women suffer hair loss, too, but the FDA has warned that they should never take Propecia because it can cause birth defects – doctors have even said that women should not touch the pills for fear of absorption through the skin.

Propecia is a lower dose of a popular drug – Proscar – used to treat men with enlarged prostates. Doctors had noticed that some prostate patients were experiencing hair regrowth; Merck studied the effect and determined that 1mg of the active ingredient, finasteride, was enough to treat baldness – not the 5mg that prostate patients take. Propecia works by suppressing a hormone that shrinks hair follicles. In tests submitted to the FDA, dermatologists concluded that 30 per cent of men given Propecia grew slight amounts of hair in a year, and another 18 per cent grew moderate to heavy amounts.

— AP, Washington

Nigeria clams up on coup arrests

Nigeria's military said yesterday that it was not yet ready to reveal the whereabouts of 12 people arrested for trying to topple army ruler General Sani Abacha, including his deputy, Lieutenant General Oladipio Diya. "There is no news," defence headquarters spokesman Colonel Godwin Ugbu said in Lagos. He added that more details of the coup would be released in due course.

Nigerian cities were quiet a day after state television broadcast a message saying the high-ranking soldiers, and one civilian, had been picked up. The main opposition coalition said it was alarmed by the arrests and said if the government had adequate evidence, the alleged plotters should be tried by an ordinary court, not a military tribunal.

The arrests come at a critical time for Nigeria, which faces elections next year as part of Gen Abacha's plan to restore civilian rule to Africa's most populous nation.

Most of those arrested were Yourees from the south-west, which has opposed the military since 1993 elections were scrapped as Youree tycoon Moshood Abiola was poised to win. Gen Abacha is from the north.

— Reuters, Lagos

Lithuania upset

Lithuanians turned their backs on independence hero Vytautas Landsbergis in Sunday's presidential election, voting instead for two political novices with no links to established parties.

Final figures issued yesterday showed that 44-year-old Arunas Paulauskas, who topped the poll with 45 per cent, would face 71-year-old Lithuanian-American Valdas Adamkus in a runoff for the largely ceremonial job on 4 January.

— Reuters, Vilnius

Tit for tat spy row

Turkey and Greece announced a round of tit-for-tat expulsions of diplomats in a spy row that signalled a worsening of relations between the two traditional rivals. The Turkish foreign ministry said it had asked the Greek embassy to withdraw an administrative diplomat at its Istanbul consulate for "activities incompatible with his status", the diplomatic euphemism for spying.

Greece denied the accusation and said it would reciprocate. "We will answer by asking a Turkish diplomat to leave. The Turkish accusations are ridiculous and aim at creating fresh tension between us," a government official said in Athens.

— Reuters, Ankara

A role in space

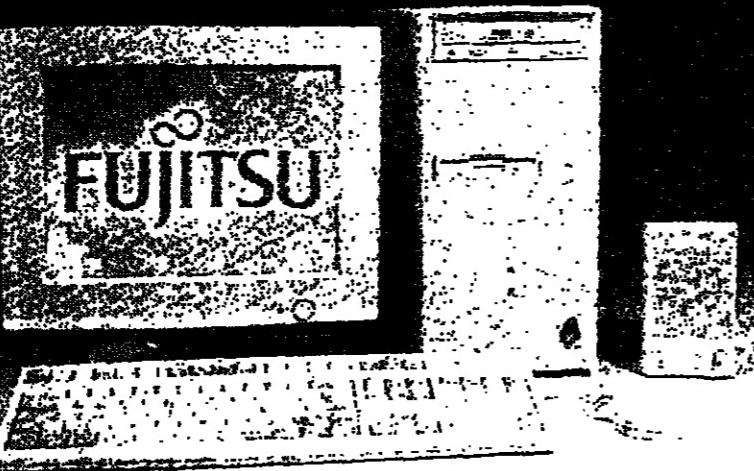
A Russian film director said he hoped to send two actors into orbit for the first drama filmed in space but space officials said the huge sums of money involved could scupper the project. "The two actors chosen have undergone the necessary medical tests and in January a period of training will begin," Yuri Karu said, adding that the candidates could be ready to fly by next August.

Russian space officials said they welcomed the project in principle but stressed that no documents had yet been signed. "Everything depends on technical conditions, including the actual state of Mir," said a Russian Space Agency spokesman.

Reuters, Moscow

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10/EUROFIGHTER



A Eurofighter takes off near Munich yesterday. Germany was the last to agree to join the venture. Photograph: Reuters

Jobs secured as Europe's war jet project takes off

Europe's biggest joint defence project to date got off the ground yesterday. Imre Karacs reports from Bonn on the launch of Eurofighter.

Four defence ministers, from Britain, Italy, Germany and Spain, put their signatures yesterday to the contract to build the war airplane of the next century. The ceremony, aptly, was held in Bonn, the capital of the last country to be persuaded by the project's merits.

The fighter was conceived in the Cold War days of 1983, and development took off in 1988, a year before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Apart from the inconvenience of the obvious en-

emy dropping out of sight, the project has been bedevilled by technical hitches, cost overruns and hesitating politicians.

The German government, apparently unconvinced by the lobbyists' technical arguments, kept the other three participating countries waiting until last month.

The German end of the contract could still hit turbulence next year if the opposition Social Democrats win the elections in September. Though the SPD is itself divided over Eurofighter, the current leadership and the vast majority of Social Democrat MPs want the project scrapped.

Assuming that does not happen, 620 aircraft will be built in the countries concerned, at an estimated total cost of £40bn. It will be the biggest single defence

contract ever undertaken by the member countries.

Britain is set to pay £16bn for 232 aircraft to replace the Tornado F3 and the Jaguar. Deliveries to the RAF will begin in 2002 and continue until 2014.

Germany is replacing the Phantom jet, as well as MiG-29s inherited from the GDR, with 180 Eurofighters. Italy will buy 121 and Spain 87.

This is quite a commitment to a piece of equipment which even its admirers admit is merely second best. The American F-22 Raptor, due to go into production early in the next century, will easily outmanoeuvre Eurofighter. But it will cost twice as much, and will create no jobs in the EU.

"This is the best plane at the right price," was how George Robertson, the Secretary of State for Defence, summed up the aircraft's virtues at yesterday's ceremony.

"It is one of the most modern and inspiring aircraft that could be produced," he gushed. "It is not only all European for European needs, but has the agility, power and versatility to deal with the varying challenges and risks we are going to face in the next 20 years."

Germany's defence minister, Volker Rühe, also made the point that the project would help Europe's air and space industry to compete with the United States. "This will make thousands of jobs safe," he said.

A total of 100,000 jobs are said to depend on Eurofighter. In Britain alone, 14,000 people will work directly on the project, and another 26,000 are estimated to depend on it.

British industry is primarily involved in construction of the front end of the jet, the cockpit, the front canard wings, part of the main wings, the new EJ200 engines and much of the avionics, including GEC Marconi, Dowty, Lucas, Martin Baker and Smiths Industries, are involved in the development of a range of equipment.

The aircraft will be assembled at British Aerospace sites in Lancashire from components manufactured by companies in the four partner nations. Rolls-Royce will manufacture the engines, primarily at their plants in Bristol and Derby. In the other countries the respective partner companies will have their own assembly lines in Munich, Madrid and Turin.

Eurofighter is a twin-engined "multi-purpose" aircraft, capable of ground attacks as well as a more general defence role. The aircraft claims to have the world's most advanced radar for long-range detection. The radar, developed in Britain, will allow pilots to detect and track numerous targets simultaneously and then to fire at enemy aircraft well beyond visual range.

The aircraft is aerodynamically unstable, necessitating advanced computer systems to keep it airborne. It will be equipped with an infra-red search and track system which will render "stealth" aircraft visible. It will be capable of flying at twice the speed of sound. Since March 1994, it has carried out more than 500 test flights.

£16bn cost of UK 'insurance policy'

In matters of high-cost, state-of-the-art military aircraft, the language as well as the philosophy of a Labour government stands transformed. In 1964, Harold Wilson damned the TSR-2 with faint praise: "If it works, and does what is expected of it at reasonable cost, we shall want it."

A few months later, and the supersonic fighter-bomber was scrapped, and replaced by the US-built F-111.

No such weaselly words yesterday from George Robertson, the Secretary of State for Defence, as he appended this Labour government's signature to the memorandum of understanding that cleared the way to full-scale production of the four-nation Eurofighter, spiritual descendant of the TSR-2.

Instead, the very blandest of justifications for a project with a £40bn price tag, of which £16bn will be picked up by the British taxpayer. It was he said in Bonn, "an insurance policy for uncertain years ahead". But for Eurofighter's multitude of critics, the real uncertainty is another: are there any enemies around who merit production of this hugely expensive piece of hardware?

The Eurofighter belongs to a generation of blue-ribbon weapons programmes like the \$2bn B-2 bomber and the \$2bn Scavenger submarine in the US, all conceived to meet a Cold War threat that no longer exists.

In the 1980s, Nato air supremacy against numerically superior Warsaw Pact forces in central Europe was vital. But now that half the pact is about to join Nato, and the Soviet Union has vanished, the original rationale is no more. Had the Eurofighter happened 10 years later, it probably would have gone the way of the TSR-2.

There remain some solid arguments in favour of the aircraft though - in the view of most independent analysts - not for the full quota of 232 ordered by the RAF. Their most obvious function is in a high-intensity regional war like the Gulf conflict, though in taking on a "rogue state" like Iraq or Iran, replacing the Tornado and the Jaguar by the Eurofighter would be a case of substituting the vastly superior with the immeasur-

ably superior. Obviously too, the Eurofighter would add teeth to the peacekeeping missions which will be a prime task of the armed forces of Britain and its Nato partners in years to come. But then again, do we need a sledgehammer to swat a fly?

"The Government should maintain its commitment to Eurofighter," the independent Saferworld security think-tank stated in a report this month, but "scale down its order rate from 20 to 12 a year".

In truth, Mr Robertson's signature acknowledged two realities: the 40,000 aerospace jobs which Eurofighter will guarantee in Britain alone



Wilson: scrapped UK warplane for US F-111

well into the new millennium - and the risk of allowing the US a monopoly of the market.

As with the TSR-2, a US alternative exists in the F-22 stealth fighter. But though it is a superior aircraft, the F-22 is almost twice as expensive as Eurofighter. And even if production was partially farmed out, it would generate far fewer jobs in the United Kingdom.

The hope of course is that exports bring down the unit cost of the jet. Smaller Nato countries are possible customers, but other potential purchasers in the Middle East and Asia are beset by financial problems. This is also to reckon without the inevitable ferocious competition from the US.

The omens from France are not encouraging. The Dassault-built Rafale, direct competitor to the Eurofighter, has won not a single export order, and its only customer, the French government, is slashing its initial order for 48 of the aircraft.

Let them



Sexual
fetishism in
the home:
a foot note

11/HEALTH



Most parents have no idea what kind of foods they should and shouldn't allow their children to eat, says Dr Dee Dawson

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

The best present for children in hospital this Christmas? Mummy and Daddy

A stay in hospital is often traumatic for children, but unless a parent or carer can be there too, says Pru Irvine, the emotional damage can last a lifetime.

I spend my life in and out of hospitals with my children. My youngest is mentally handicapped and my eldest suffers very mild cerebral palsy. But I will never become accustomed to being by the bedside, 24-hours a day. In the beginning there's fear and anguish for your child, tinged with the relief of not having to do homework, supper, bath and bed. But then there's my child who suddenly seems very small, frightened and in pain. And then there's the boredom. I can't drink coffee on the ward and he doesn't want me to leave him. I can't live on disgusting sandwiches from a vending machine and the cafeteria is closed for refurbishment. I spend the night in a chair next to his bed or on the floor on a half-mattress. And then, of course, there's no sleep. It's never dark or quiet. I listen to the crying of children who have nobody with them and who must wait for a nurse with time for a cuddle.

The 1996 Children's Charter recommended universal parental access to paediatric wards. But there are gaps between policy and practice and much depends on individual hospitals. Although many are defensive about such gaps, most admit they are inevitable. Most encourage parents to stay and many have consistently improved their facilities. Maggie Rogers, Lead Nurse for Children's Services for Barts, Queen Elizabeth and The Royal London hospitals says "Many senior managers just don't understand the needs of children and so adopt a very hands-off approach. There need to be changes, both medical and management, at senior level. We need to create an ethos of family-centred care."

All over Britain there will be children who spend this Christmas in hospital. Most will have family and friends staying, but many will spend days and nights without the comfort and love of a parent or a carer. It can't be good for children to be left battling with an experience that most adults shudder at. Who is letting who down? Are parents failing their children or is the Health Service so bogged down in policy that it's forgotten its human face?

Mother's who could stay but don't are often consumed by fear, anxiety and feelings of incompetence in the face of nursing skills. For their children there is a cycle of protest and despair that finally gives way to withdrawal.

"People develop institutional defences in hospital," says Juliet Hopkins, a child psychotherapist at the Tavistock Clinic in London. "What you don't want to know is that it's a disease that skirts a certain type of child (a perfectionist and an obsessive) at a particularly stressful time. The child's life feels out of control and so she controls the one thing she can: her body. (Only 10 per cent of anorexics are boys.) Dee Dawson is saying that we are raising a nation of children who are confused about food and that grown-ups are only making it worse. 'Do parents know whether we are supposed to be giving kids skimmed milk or semi-skimmed, butter, chips or crisps? What about chocolate?'

But children do not become anorexic just because their mums won't let them eat chips. Anorexia is a disease that affects a certain type of child (a perfectionist and an obsessive) at a particularly stressful time. The child's life feels out of control and so she controls the one thing she can: her body. (Only 10 per cent of anorexics are boys.) Dee Dawson is saying that we are raising a nation of children who are confused about food and that grown-ups are only making it worse. 'Do parents know whether we are supposed to be giving kids skimmed milk or semi-skimmed, butter, chips or crisps? What about chocolate?'

So, I ask, it's crisps and chocolate bars all round then? "Not every day," she says. "You've got to be sensible." And for once she sounds just like any other mum.

trust. Suddenly they're no longer protected from a trauma. Fear and anger take over and, if they've been in hospital long enough, they're emotionally frozen when they get home. You can't tell how much they've suffered until they start to thaw out."

Sister Madeleine Mitchell at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh endorses this view, but she says there are often minuses associated with parents who stay. A child may refuse to co-operate unless the parent is constantly there. The parent feels guilty and often doesn't know when to go away. The system doesn't always work as well as the policy, she says.

The 1996 Children's Charter recommended universal parental access to paediatric wards. But there are gaps between policy and practice and much depends on individual hospitals. Although many are defensive about such gaps, most admit they are inevitable. Most encourage parents to stay and many have consistently improved their facilities. Maggie Rogers, Lead Nurse for Children's Services for Barts, Queen Elizabeth and The Royal London hospitals says "Many senior managers just don't understand the needs of children and so adopt a very hands-off approach. There need to be changes, both medical and management, at senior level. We need to create an ethos of family-centred care."

But not all parents can stay. Other family commitments are a powerful force in keeping parents away. Working mothers are also a contributory factor. "If a parent isn't there," says Maggie Rogers, "We will provide someone who can help alleviate some of the psychological damage. Most hospitals are good at long term family accommodation but facilities for parents to sleep and wash and eat on the wards are not good. We should be able to provide comfortable facilities near the child who is only in for a short period."

At Great Ormond Street, information about accommodation and facilities is sent in advance of a child's arrival. One parent is expected to stay. The Hospital's Family Accommodation Manager, Michelle David, says a child in hospital creates enormous stress on a family. The feelings left by such an experience, she says, can last the whole of the child's life.

There are also cultural differences in attitudes to care. At the Queen Elizabeth in east London, 70 per cent of patients are of ethnic origin. It's in a long tradition for Asian mothers to stay with their children, while travelling families will often not even cross the threshold of a hospital because they loathe institutions.

Consultant paediatrician Sheila McKenzie says if you refused an Afro-Caribbean mother a place to sleep, "you'd get a smack in the face".

Let them eat Jaffa cakes

We may think we know what constitutes a wholesome diet for children, Ann Trenerman says, but a doctor who treats young anorexics condemns parents who see raw carrots and a bit of fruit as a healthy snack.

Dr Dee Dawson is a mother of five and an expert on eating disorders who believes that grown-ups do not have a clue about what children should be eating. She says this as often, and as loudly, as possible in the hope that we adults come to our senses. Five minutes into our interview, she had attacked the Government, schools and the medical profession. But then she gets personal and turns to the vexed subject of her children's lunchboxes.

"The rules at my children's school are stupid. They are not allowed to bring Jaffa cakes because they have a bit of chocolate on them," she says. "I send them anyway. They aren't supposed to bring crisps. Why?" Perhaps, I say, because crisps are meant to be bad for you. "No they're not! They're a wonderful form of nutrition. They give energy. The headmistress suggested that they might bring carrots, celery and fruit. I said if my kid wants a

break, she wants to eat. If I send carrots and celery, I might as well give her a cardboard box to chew on."

This sounds like a joke but Dr Dawson, the 50-year-old medical director of Rhodes Farm Clinic for anorexic children in North London, does not laugh. But surely, I say, children can only benefit from fresh vegetables? "Of course children have to have salad and fruit and fresh vegetables," she says, "but they have no calories and no nutritional use except for the vitamins. They don't contribute to the child's growth and energy. This is what a child is all about - growing, strong bones, strong teeth, healthy muscles. Kids need so much energy and none of those foods provide any of that. You give a child a carrot stick at break and you may as well give them nothing."

Dee Dawson specialises in making such challenges. Why shouldn't children eat between meals if they are hungry? Why should children worry about fatty foods? Why don't we teach our children that fat is essential to our diets and that some fats are good for you? What is wrong with vending machines in schools? Dr Dawson believes that the answer to each of these questions is obvious if we would just rediscover the common sense that we have lost in our fat-phobic age.

And the woman who, before qualifying as a doctor, founded a company devoted to making clothes for those size 16 and over is on a campaign to put things right.

"Parents are confused. Doctors are confused. The Government is confused. Schools are confused," she says. Last month she attacked the Government in a speech to the Girls' Schools Association, criticising advice that children should eat low-fat foods, and a report that suggested tuck shops should close. Her views ended up on the front page. "I was delighted," she says.

Since then the Department of Health has distanced itself from the leaked report that was submitted in the run-up to next year's green paper on public health. "It has no status other than as a document requested," said a spokeswoman who confirmed that there are no nutrition guidelines for children. The Health Education Authority touches on the subject briefly in its booklet "Balance of Good Health" which is full of advice on how to eat less fat. Nor does the Department of Education provide much help. In June it was announced that nutritional standards were to be set for school lunches but there is no progress yet. A spokeswoman said they hadn't yet begun drafting the Healthy

Eating Initiative.

The Department of Health added that it was always keen to hear other opinions and urged Dr Dawson to feel free to contribute. Somehow, I don't think she will need much encouragement. "I would like to see the Government prepare a proper resource kit for schools which talk about healthy eating, healthy exercise, about laxative abuse, anorexia and the long term effects of eating disorders," she says.

"Schools are interfering in aspects of nutrition that they don't really understand. If they had a pack, then we could all agree to tell children they should be on a low-fat diet. Lots of teachers think that's a good idea. But it's not for children."

The core of Dr Dawson's philosophy is that most children, left to themselves, do not have eating problems. "Adults eat for comfort and when they are not hungry because they like food. Children tend not to do that. I personally wouldn't restrict my child's calories. I would allow them to find their own level." As long as her children eat three meals a day, she is not worried about snacks. Children become anxious about food because their parents are and she points to the boom-and-bust Christmas and New Year period as evidence. "Dieting has become a na-

tional pastime. It's not often that you find someone who says they eat what they like, when they like, and aren't worried."

Many parents, under the impression that all fat is bad and all carrot sticks good, end up depriving their children though Dr Dawson uses a harsher word. "What happens when you starve kids is they become dull and less outgoing. They've lost their joie de vivre. This happens before you see any weight loss. The whole metabolism will drop. A lot of parents are doing that. If their children were eating more they would be living life on a different plane with energy to burn."

No child should be on a diet unless under the care of a doctor, she says, and only 4 per cent of children are considered to be overweight anyway. But 1 to 2 per cent of all school children have anorexia and the two groups are not unrelated. "Some children are hampered by being truly fat and they could do with a bit of help. But it needs to be done carefully, because something like a third of the children at my clinic have been overweight, have gone on diets and just not stopped."

The clinic is in a large house and takes 32 children at a time. When you walk up the drive, you can see into the dining room. It is a sad sight of four times to see so many shrunk-

en children gathered together to learn how to eat. So far 400 children have come here over the years and all arrive weighing 80 per cent of their normal body weight or less (48 per cent was the lowest). Dee shows me a picture of a boy near the lower end of the scale - it is like looking at a victim of famine.

"He was absolutely terrified of fat," she says. Her youngest patient was six years old. "She thought that she had fat thighs and her tummy wasn't flat."

But children do not become anorexic just because their mums won't let them eat chips. Anorexia is a disease that affects a certain type of child (a perfectionist and an obsessive) at a particularly stressful time. The child's life feels out of control and so she controls the one thing she can: her body. (Only 10 per cent of anorexics are boys.) Dee Dawson is saying that we are raising a nation of children who are confused about food and that grown-ups are only making it worse. "Do parents know whether we are supposed to be giving kids skimmed milk or semi-skimmed, butter, chips or crisps? What about chocolate? "

So, I ask, it's crisps and chocolate bars all round then? "Not every day," she says. "You've got to be sensible." And for once she sounds just like any other mum.



Sexual fetishism in the home: a foot note

"Morning, Mrs Betts."
"Morning, doctor."
"All ready for Christmas?"
"Just got to crimp the figgy duff."
"Splendid. So what can I do for you?"
"My husband wants to smell my feet."
"And?"
"And his friend Percy's."
"I see. Why do you feel the need to involve your family physician?"
"I want to know if it's normal."
"Mmm. I did once attend a lecture on the functions of the foot, but I can't

remember that as one of them."
"So it's abnormal?"
"I'm not sure. Why exactly does he want to do it?"

"He says he's locked his sexuality in the closet for too long, and it's time to celebrate his desires, not feel guilty about them."

"That doesn't sound like the Bertie Bell I know."

"What you mean good Catholic upbringing, Sunday evening two-minute Missionary man?"

"I don't know him that well. In fact, I only ever see him in the cheese shop."

"Not lately, you won't have. He's been taking most afternoons off to go to car boot sales."

"For what?"

"Boots."

"Very good."

"No, seriously. He buys the second-hand boots of authority figures - policemen, soldiers, Jesuit priests - and he takes them up to the bathroom to sniff them."

"Anything else?"

"He's taken to masturbating into a sock."

"Well, we've all done that."

"Pardon?"

"You know. When you're young and excitable and pumped full of testosterone - and you want to experiment with yourself without leaving tell-tale snail's tracks on the sheets so your mother won't know."

"We buried his mother ten years ago."

"Yes, but I'm just saying that using

a sock isn't unusual."
"Maybe not. But he only does it if the sock's really smelly and doesn't belong to him."

"And how is he generally? His weight, his appetite?"

"Fine."

"Passing water OK?"

"Far as I know."

"Bowels regular?"

"Yes. Where is this leading?"

"I've no idea. I'm just trying to..."

"So you don't know anything about my problem?"

"I'm not even sure if it is a problem. Do you mind his new hobby?"

"Not if it keeps him in the boxroom. To be honest, we've been getting on each other's nerves a bit since he went semi-retired."

"Getting under each other's feet?"

"Doctor, limp word-plays are fine in sitcoms but they're no place in the surgery."

"Sorry. So the sock and shoe stuff doesn't bother you, you just don't want him interfering with your balls?"

"Oh, I like a foot massage - he's always been good at those - but I'm just not sure I want him sniffing them."

"But I bet he's been a closet sniffer for years without you realising. Hard day at work, love? Feet must be killing you. Kick off those stilettos and let me snort your web spaces."

"Come to think of it, he has always insisted on kneeling at my feet. I thought it was the myopia."

"Thank you doctor and Merry Christmas. These are for you."

"Oh, a pair of socks. How lovely."

knowing - now he wants to share his pleasure with you, with your consent."

"But why was he hooked on feet in the first place?"

"Who knows? Maybe his Aunty Sybil used to tickle his feet till he passed out. Maybe his brother used to pin him down, stick dirty socks in his face and say 'smell the cheese'." Or maybe it's because foot sniffing is still a cultural taboo in Cheetham Mendip and he's on a mission to push back the boundaries of sexual experience."

"He is on the Parish Council. But why has he suddenly come out about it? What's given him the courage?"

"I've no idea. You say he's gone into semi-retirement. Maybe that's given him time to reflect on his life."

"Not with the time he spends on that bloody computer."

"On the Internet is he?"

"I'm not sure. But our phone-bill's through the roof."

"I think you'll find he's surfing to the Erotic Extremities Website."

"Does such a thing exist?"

"Oh yes. It's very useful when you've staggered back idea-less from a Christmas cider promotion with 500 words to knock off by dawn."

"You've lost me now..."

"Remember. In human sexuality, the most profound taboos are often counterbalanced by intense longings to transgress the fragile borders between the permitted and the forbidden."

"Come to think of it, he has always insisted on kneeling at my feet. I thought it was the myopia."

"Thank you doctor and Merry Christmas. These are for you."

"Oh, a pair of socks. How lovely."

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12/VISUAL ARTS



'What I am doing is making a net - everything I do I make join to everything else': Tom Phillips with 'Women's Work', above, a quilt composed of stitched-together prostitutes' advertising cards; his own mirror-image in 'Self-portrait (ekphrasis)', 1989, below right; and a page from the latest, revised edition of his treated-text masterpiece 'A Humument', below left, celebrating his 50th birthday and lifelong love of cricket

Main photograph: Paul Tozer

Portrait of the artist as a young man (going on sixty)

Painter, poet, printmaker, collector, composer, curator, sculptor, singer, translator... At 60, the polymathic Mr Phillips is still just trying to do what he's always done: be an artist as best he can.
Profile by Andrew Lambirth

When the artist Tom Phillips was 50 he hired the Oval Cricket Ground for a celebratory birthday match between the art world's great and good - artists versus critics. (Perhaps it should become an annual event; an effective way of exorcising bad feeling between the two camps.) Interestingly, Phillips doesn't actually play cricket himself, though he loves it dearly: it was the spectacle, the idea of the thing, that appealed to him. This year he turned 60, and obviously could not let the event pass without suitable commemoration. Six main events, one for each decade of his life, were planned, comprising three exhibitions and three books - a substantial achievement, by anyone's reckoning.

Phillips is a man of prodigious energy and multifarious talents. He owns to more than a dozen identities: besides being a painter, draughtsman, printmaker and sculptor, he is variously essayist, composer, film-maker, collector, poet, curator, singer, translator, fiction-writer and musician. And

more. He welcomes the invitation to do different things, such as designing the sets for the recent production of *The Winter's Tale* at the Globe Theatre. He laments that there are never enough projects like that. "I get very very few things in the way of commissions unless it be portraits, and portraits are not what I want to do." In 1989/90 Phillips had a retrospective at the National Portrait Gallery. Key examples were on show, such as his regal depiction of Iris Murdoch. Ninety percent of his portraits are of friends or associates. They usually take a year to produce, and demand a commitment of time and energy Phillips would prefer to bestow on other activities.

Many people know of Tom Phillips for one thing only, the strange image-book and treated Victorian novel, entitled *A Humument*. Influenced by the cut-up technique of William Burroughs, the pages of the original novel (*A Human Document* by WH Mallock) are re-worked into new texts. Intentionally-linked speech bubbles meander through new scenes painted over the Victorian prose, sometimes only partially obliterating it. The range is wide. Phillips has worked on this project for more than 30 years, constantly revising his original treatment. As he says: "It does contain, in some reflected sense, everything I've done. Its imagery is mostly allied to other things I've made." As Phillips states in the book, it is "written for rounded ladies full of arty London gossip". So there you have it.

The character of any artist is complex, says Phillips: "On one side I'm incredibly vain, on the other I'm incredibly humble. These two people fight each other." He is sanguine about the necessity for self-belief. "Vanity must play a part or you couldn't keep going in this job." But he also needs a response. "I want to please people or give them pleasure. I always think of the delight that I hope to cause. I chuckle at things and I enjoy them." Nevertheless, it can be said (and on this occasion I said it) that Phillips deliberately makes things difficult for us, particularly in his writings. He hides behind aliases, plays games with identities, sets up alternative readings, to trail red herrings. Isn't this counterproductive? "No, if you're concentrating, you can have a good time." He thinks that about five people in the world follow what he does, in the sense of fully comprehending the tricks he's up to. What price elitism?

Two of this anniversary

year's exhibitions have been in London, at galleries close to the artist's studio home in Camberwell. The first, now over, was at the South London Gallery, next to Camberwell School of Art, where Phillips studied from 1961 to 1964. Entitled *Sacred and Profane*, the show consisted of skulls cast in bronze,

making marks. This exhibition is more retrospective in feel, covering 20 years of mostly works on paper. Phillips loves to experiment, witness the wide variety of mark-making his work, from the representational to the abstract. "Quite a lot of what I do is just improvised drawing to find out what I can

was the nearest gallery to which the boy Tom Phillips could cycle to see great pictures. He now repays the debt with a remarkable book called *Aspects of Art: A Painter's Alphabet* (Bellw £14.95), a series of commentaries from A to Z on the paintings in the Dulwich collection. Phillips writes very well about

ensemble. Before this, Phillips hadn't written anything for 20 years. "I had a little era when what I was doing was relevant, and that had passed." His opera *Irma*, for instance, dates from 1972, and was recorded by Gavin Bryars in 1978. (Phillips himself prefers the 1988 CD version on Matchless Recordings.)

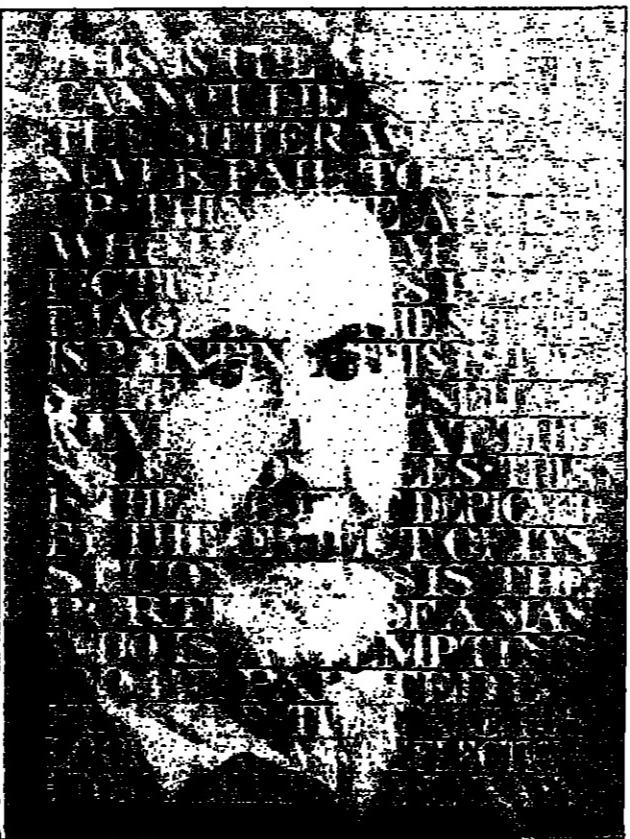
away with it. And if you've got something to give."

Phillips claims to have only two collectors in the world, one in Miami and one in London. They are his only significant patrons. "I do very well but I wish I could earn a living. I can't earn what I spend. And I'd quite like to have a comfortable life now; I think I've put a lot in, and I'd like a little back. I don't want to travel ninth class." He mentions the cost of mounting the two London exhibitions, money not easily recouped since most people wouldn't perceive the shows as selling venues, and would therefore never think to enquire for prices. And at the moment Phillips has no dealer. As he says: "I am my own ineffectual businessman."

Regarding his life with levelling gaze, he considers all his different activities to be in fact only one. "There's a metaphor for it. What I am doing is making a net: everything I do I make join to everything else." He is currently working on a millennium project, a postcard history of the English Speaking Peoples. "That comes out of a very old preoccupation with postcards. Nothing I do is new. I laid down all these lines a long time ago. At the end of the Sixties I found myself doing certain things, and I haven't yet finished them. There was no plan - the plan comes after. You wouldn't know what you wanted to say before you started the activity."

This millennium project revolves around postcards written by people to each other over the past 100 years. The cards are the content. The only thing Phillips will be doing is to orchestrate them into "a kind of poem of the century". The idea is to publish them as a book displaying both text and image, ie both sides of each card. "It's a document about taste, about events as reflected in postcards, about the way people write and address each other, the things they know, how they refer to the world." Intended for the year 1999, it will be a summation of one aspect of Phillips's activity - that of social historian. What then is his real role? "I'm trying to understand something on behalf of other people. I'm longing my attempt. I'm just being an artist as best I can with the equipment given to me." Seems fair enough.

'Drawing to a Conclusion': to 18 Jan, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London SE1 (0181-693 5254). 'A Humument', second revised edition, published by Thames & Hudson on 26 Jan, £14.95. Website: <http://www.rosaccordis.com/humument>



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LAST WEEKS

SDC

I wish I'd
REVELATIONS
Clara Dickson Wright
lived her father. So much
of her greatest regret
at having done away with
herself, she tells

it's written in

How a nice

I wish I'd given my father a good roasting

REVELATIONS

Clarissa Dickson Wright
hated her father. So much
so that her greatest regret
is not having done away with
him herself, she tells *Pru Irvine*.

My father was 50 when I was born. He was a surgeon – very successful, very powerful and an alcoholic, paranoid to the extreme. Did he practise as an alcoholic? Of course he practised, most certainly. I mean, half the surgeons in the country are practising alcoholics. If you can't fly an aeroplane across America or cook a 10-course dinner party – as I did – on automatic pilot, then you can whip out an appendix or perform the odd lobotomy. As far as I know, he never did anything he shouldn't have. Poor man, he was very violent and very terrifying and very cruel and all the things that I subsequently became when I started drinking. I got a great deal of pleasure out of driving him mad. He was a genius and I was devotional. I learnt to duck and run at a very early age.

My mother was an Australian heiress, married at 17 straight out of a convent. They met in Singapore and I think he fell in love with the lifestyle rather than her. He was a sod to be married to. She dragged him back to London where he met all the right people and put up his plaque in Wimpole Street. We were rich but my father was incredibly miserly, although the one thing he never stinted on was the household bills. The servants ate what we ate. My mother used to say: "How will they ever learn to cook fillet steak if they don't eat it?" Father was a great gourmet. The only thing we didn't have World War Three about in our house was food. I remember him driving me to school talking about which O-levels I would sit to prepare me for medicine. I said I was going to be a barrister and he nearly crashed the car. It was one of the happiest moments of my life. He hated lawyers, which was why I decided to be a barrister. When I got a place at Oxford he refused to pay unless I read medicine. I didn't want to read medicine. In the end I read Law as an external student and shamed him into paying the fees – thanks to Edna Katz. Edna owned a shoe shop in Baker Street. She had no children and doted on me. When I told her about my father she wanted to give me the money but

I persuaded her to lend it to me. Go to synagogue and tell everyone, I said. I knew how much the Jews valued education and my father had a lot of Jewish clients. I had a lot of Jewish relatives. Within two weeks he'd picked up the tab. It gave me an enormous sense of my own power and a very great deal of pleasure.

Eventually, of course, he went off his head and left home. He really did quite mad and then became a vegetable and lived out his last few years in a psychiatric hospital. I think having to pay for my 21st birthday party was the last straw. He agreed to my having 200 people to the party. "Go and tell your mother to organise it and send the bills to me," he said. I didn't trust him an inch so I took instructions from my mother and did it myself. She wasn't to speak to anyone or sign anything, not even a delivery note. It was planned for the Saturday before my actual birthday. It was wonderful. The next day I said, "thank you, daddy." "Don't thank me," he said, "thank your mother. She signed for everything so she can pay for everything." When I told him I'd organised it he said, "well, you can pay." "But daddy, I'm not 21 until tomorrow." That was the day he hit me with a red hot poker. He paid because they sued him. Yes, not killing my father is my regret. The law had nothing to do with it. Honestly, if I could have I would have. I used to pore over botanical volumes. There's this thing called Wolfsbane – a scentless, tasteless almost instant poison – which I failed singularly to find in the hedgerows of my childhood. I remember reading once that a Marks & Spencer store was selling it mistakenly as some sort of campanula. I was furious I hadn't been there. I used to hunt the woods for lethal mushrooms but to no avail. I never found anything. I always thought the world would be a better place if I could kill him. I just never found the right way of doing it.

'Two Fat Ladies' is on BBC2 at 8pm on Christmas Eve

'I used to hunt the woods for lethal mushrooms but to no avail,' says Clarissa Dickson Wright

Photograph: Nils Jorgensen / Rex Features



It's written in the cards...

What does your Christmas card reveal about your personality? Tony Blair's showed himself and his children – as a Prime Minister you could actually trust. William Hague's depicted Pitt the Younger – presumably as the most recent Conservative Prime Minister who you could actually trust. So beware... your card could be saying more than you think...



And a Happy Christmas from everybody except Humphrey the cat

● Charity card: I am a really caring and compassionate person, even though I only buy the nice Greenpeace designs with whales and stuff and not the strange ones painted by amputee women using their feet (because, frankly, my five-year-old could draw better than that). And this is, after all, the era of "compassion with a hard edge".

● Large glossy card with enclosed "Family Newsletter": I am a pretentious middle-class prat, and so is each and every member of my immediate family. Here is a rundown of their patrician achievements if further proof were needed.

● Card depicting the Baby Jesus in a lowly cattle shed: you have received a promotional mail-out from the British Meat Marketing Commission.

● Really tacky and tasteless musical card: I was going to buy you some really tacky and tasteless musical socks, but I didn't know your size. This will prove just as irritating when your children play with it constantly at the dinner table.

● Card depicting a Christmas tree bedecked with softly-glowing candles: you have received a promotional mail-out from the British Tallow Marketing Commission.

● E-mailed card: I am on the cutting edge of technology, and also aware of the fact that I can save at least 20p a card by not actu-

ally buying any this year. (However, since I only have about three friends left, such a saving is of little importance in the long run.)

● Card showing a jolly bearded fellow in a red suit, surrounded by Elves: I am Robin Cook, and Tony told me it was good PR to send cards with a photo of you and your family on the front.

● Related card (with optional message reading "sorry if this gets delayed in the post"): I have picked up a whole box of cards reduced to 20p in the January sales.

● Large pink card depicting rabbit dressed as Santa and printed message "Christmas Wishes to a Darling Little Girl": charmingly thoughtful if from an elderly female relative to a small child. Psychologically disturbing if from your boss, if you are over the mistletoe last Christmas (and even that was with Drunk Uncle Jack).

● Card wishing recipient a "Joyeux Noël", "Bonne Année" or "Fröhliches Weihnachten": I am strongly in favour of closer European Union. My idea of dealing with leftover turkey is to allow them into Europe providing they meet with all the required convergence criteria.

● Card depicting a Christmas tree bedecked with softly-glowing candles: you have received a promotional mail-out from the British Tallow Marketing Commission.

● Card showing blessed Virgin, meek and mild: I am still not convinced by all this Girl Power stuff.

● Card with cheque inside: I am warm, caring, and probably about to ask you a large favour.

● Postcard from Barbados: I am just trying to make you jealous that I'm rich enough to escape Christmas in the bloody British climate.

● Postcard from Bermuda: I am Geoffrey Robinson MP.

● Hand-made card: I am a highly artistic type, and consequently spend my entire day sitting around with sod all to do except make Christmas cards. Being on benefit, I also have no money to spend on Christmas cards (even those horrid cheapo ones from Woolies).

● Personalised card with family photo on the front: I am so fundamentally insecure that I feel the need to provide photographic proof that someone has finally agreed to marry and/or have children with me. Given the stressful nature of Christmas in the 1990s, this may also be a useful reminder of the fast time the whole family was actually together.

● Personalised card with family photo on the front, if you are a politician: I have a lot of cards to send and getting Euan to do them on his computer works out much cheaper. Also, it'll save having to do a photocall by the garden gate if I'm implicated



An orderly Christmas to you all from Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of Metropolitan Police

in a sex scandal during the next 12 months.

● Personalised card with passport photo on the front: I am Jack Straw, trying to introduce identity cards by the back door.

● Black-edged card inscribed with message of sincere condolence: I am a killjoy.

● Bright yellow card reading "Royal Mail called but you were out. Your parcel(s) have been returned to the Sorting Office for collection after 27/12/97"; you will not be getting any Christmas presents this year. Ha! (And, incidentally, we've already broken them all by trying unsuccessfully to shove them through your letterbox.)

Debbie Barham

How a nice Jewish boy came to celebrate Christmas

They may as well as have been the Waltons. They were 22 carat solid gold Christians and I was eating their turkey. Peter Moss recalls a Christmas past.

Descended as I am from Abraham, via a boxer named Mendosa and a car dealer called Moskowitz, Christmas doesn't mean a great deal to me.

This wasn't always the case. I remember when I was a kid, my non-Jewish friend Timothy, keen to patch up 2,000 years of religious differences, invited me to celebrate Christmas with his family. Immediately, difference number one. They celebrate holidays, we just observe them – which is true, as anyone who's

ever sat in passive boredom at the Passover Seder table, replete with burnt eggs, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread, will testify. Eager for some jolly celebrations, I accepted the offer.

Grandma Walton sensed my discomfort at pulling crackers, singing carols and eating suspicious white meat. "So what do you lot do for Christmas?" she inquired. I told her we didn't observe Christmas, but instead we have Chanukah. Warming to my theme, I explained the origins of Chanukah, recounting the miracle of the Jewish people making a teaspoon of oil last for eight days. She wasn't impressed. She then launched into a tirade of religious one-upmanship. "Our miracles are much more impressive than yours!"

We sat around the dinner table in a scene that Woody Allen was to transplant a decade later straight into *Annie Hall*: 11 Wasps and a snot-nosed Jewish kid from the posh end of the road. Immediately, difference number two. Goyim are so quiet. In a Jewish house you can't

hear the conversation for soup. In a non-Jewish house you can't hear the conversation. The Waltons home was so quiet you'd have thought someone had died.

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The food ministry still serves the wrong people



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At last the Government has got round to announcing a full-dress inquiry into the sequence of events and decisions surrounding the discovery of BSE and its consequences for humans – though, for an administration full of the delight of Bill Gates, to be heard blaming a computer breakdown for the embarrassing delay in getting Jack Cunningham to the despatch box was ... well, off message has become the favoured phrase.

Still, much better late than never. Any detailed narrative of the inner workings of the state is welcome, especially where the public's health and safety are concerned. The Scott Report on the sale of arms to Iraq, dense, multi-volumed beast that it was, will stand the test of the years and remain an absorbing and informative account of how Whitehall really works. The BSE report should be delivered more quickly and should be shorter – but must be just as rigorous.

If there has been a breakdown in mutual understanding between the us, the governed, and

them, the government, one way out is better public education in the by-ways of power. That might lead us to conclude that, most of the time, and allowing for human frailty, the system works. This

ought to be a result of a freedom of information Bill – establishing that we have a governing system in which deficits and mistakes can be rectified. Only a fool would suggest that governing a pluralistic, diverse society is easy. It is up to place competing interests in controversial order. But the public has to be convinced time and again that the processes by which decisions are taken are fair, ordered and reliable. This is what the BSE inquiry must discover.

Its ultimate value will not however be some sort of bureaucratic or scientific equivalent of "who lost China". Labour ministers will, no doubt, be keen to have guilty Conservatives named, if they can find some. The public, too, is still owed a blow-by-blow account of who knew what when, and whether decisions were unjustifiably delayed. But what this inquiry surely ought to do, above all, is hammer a final nail into the coffin of that special organ of government dedicated to a privileged interest group, the

farmers and food processors. If the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food survives this exercise, it will have been in vain.

No one is asking for some tight fit between the way government is structured and the world as it is. But there is something remarkable and dismaying about how the present structure of ministries was readily identifiable to a Rip Van Winkle, waking after 50 years to survey the cabinet ranks. The Department of Health is, still, a department for doctors in which public health and preventive medicine remain also-rans. The state's twin arms for taking money from people and paying money to people are still miles apart.

And then there is Maff, still going strong, despite the liberalisation of trade which means, or ought to mean that British consumers have the run of the world for their food; despite the continuing shrinkage of primary production as a proportion of national product; and despite the rise of environmental consciousness and public concern at

the industrialisation of agriculture. To say that we have to have Maff because of the Common Agricultural Policy is to put the cart before the horse. The CAP is both a sign of the European Union's weakness (the Eurosceptics have never understood that point) and a barrier to the EU's development.

Labour promises an independent Food Safety Agency but seems to think the public would accept its location under Jack Cunningham and Maff. It won't. The BSE inquiry will, we suspect, kill for ever the idea that Maff and its ministers are a food ministry rather than a producers' support system. And it would be a nonsense to separate food safety from the promotion of public health. We already know that however eminent the experts and however disinterested (for example on the Food Safety Advisory Committee) their reports, they are discoloured by being made to Maff officials and ministers. It is not that departments are entirely hidebound, or that the people

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and include a daytime telephone number.
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address.
Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

You were warned

Sir: I am surprised that any readers of your newspaper are surprised at the actions of the Government in reframing the welfare state (letters, 8, 11, 13, 17, 19 December).

Long before the May elections, it was two articles in this newspaper that prompted me to study New Labour thinking and for the first time in my life to vote Labour.

The first of these was by Tony Blair, in which he argued that the old politics of right and left was gone. The future differences (in terms of practical policies) would be of priority and emphasis.

The second was an article by Frank Field setting out his views on the welfare state and welfare reform. The telling section for me was his comment that the current system of welfare gives rationality to choices and actions by individuals which, by any sensible measure, are in fact irrational for both the individual and society.

The clinching argument was Tony Blair's speech at the launch of the final report of the Commission on Social Justice in 1994. "Bevin's first-generation welfare was designed to pick up the pieces when things went wrong... Second-generation welfare is about giving people a hand-up not a handout."

It was these (inter alia) that gave me the confidence that New Labour would have the strength of purpose to challenge the shibboleths of the welfare lobby and take hard decisions in the wider common interest and the best interests of those in need of state help.

The policies of the current government were well telegraphed before the election and are being consistently implemented after it. I cannot help but feel that many of those who now have a problem used their vote in May against something rather than for.

PAUL KELLY

London SW19

Sir: Mr Blair's idea of "pushing people into jobs" might be more convincing if the rest of

the population desperately seeking work were not finding it impossible to find a job to claw their way into.

Unfortunately, unemployed jobseekers stand far less chance of gaining employment than their working competitors.

As a wife and mother of three, I have been trying to "return to work" for years. I have a Master's degree, substantial management experience and a positive attitude. I have attended numerous interviews, at which, I am informed on debriefing, my performance and presentation skills are excellent. However, the story is always the same: the employer chooses the candidate who already already working.

Any initiatives or benefit-cutting to "encourage" people back to work are useless when millions of employers consider working candidates to be a safer bet than unemployed "job-seekers".

JEANY ROBINSON

Alston, Cumbria

Forests of paper

Sir: Charlie Trousdell (letter, 16 December) is right when he suggests that it may be better to home-compost some paper and card rather than recycle them. However, we would suggest that this only applies to a very small percentage of paper (for example, paper contaminated by food).

Research by the US Environmental Protection Agency and research for the European Commission clearly shows that recycling of paper is a good environmental option, especially when compared with incineration or landfill. Recycling paper is not only better in terms of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases, because making paper from trees is more energy-intensive than recycling, but it also reduces the pressure on forests. Wildlife-rich forests are being felled and being replaced with wildlife poor intensive industrial forests to supply our demand for more and more paper.

If we want to protect biodiversity we need to reduce paper consumption and increase recycling. Buying recycled paper, recycling your *Independent* and recycling your Christmas wrapping paper would be a good start.

MIKE CHILDS
Waste Campaigner
GEORGINA GREEN
Forests Campaigner
Friends of the Earth
London N1

Sex or violence

Sir: In congratulating Andreas Whittam Smith on his appointment as president of the British Board of Film Classification I am reminded of a talk I attended at the Festival Hall many years ago by the then President, John Trevelyan.

After showing us some examples of items which had been censored which were mostly of excessive violence and mostly Japanese, he made the point that he was not so concerned about scenes of explicit sex but saddened by the fact that they were so often involved with violence rather than love. I am sure that this view is as relevant today as it was then.

ROBIN BUTTERELL

Chester

Europe's 2000 bug

Sir: M J Knight (letter, 18 December) writes that "the response of the European Union [to the millennium bug] is to rush into the single currency in 1999".

The 1999 date was set down as the last possible deadline in the Maastricht treaty in 1992. It seems a bit rich to blame EU politicians if computer departments around the continent have been too stupid to do anything about it before now.

PETER JOHNSON

Brussels

Spectral handbag

Sir: Considering the central role of Cambridge's Peterhouse in the Thatcherite revolution, the strange apparitions reported on 20 December ("The ghost of Peterhouse") must be the Ghost of Toryism Past.

Professor PATRICK J BOYLAN

City University

London EC2



William Wilberforce, an example to today's Labour MPs

No slave of party

Sir: I offer William Wilberforce MP as an inspiration to today's New Labour MPs whose desire and inclination on welfare and benefit reform may be to vote according to their principles, but whose wills may falter in the face of party pressure to think of their "careers" and sentimental appeals to political friendship.

In 1785 Wilberforce helped Pitt draw up a modest Reform Bill which sought to destroy the rotten borough system. In a speech on 18 April 1785 he showed that he already disliked the politics of "party". By destroying the rotten boroughs, he said, "freedom of opinion would be restored, and Party connections in a great measure vanish". He looked to a time "when no Member would vote to please a patron".

He was always prepared to act independently and always put principles before party or other interests. He concluded one letter to an aggrieved constituent: "However you may conceive my opinions erroneous, I trust you will believe that I am not influenced by private friendship or party spirit, but that I am actuated by a sincere regard to the public good."

It is to this man and these principles that we owe the abolition of slavery and countless other parliamentary measures for the benefit of the poor, the oppressed, the marginalised and the enslaved.

His principles and the courage to follow them regardless of the consequences to his political career were inspired, grounded and nourished by his being an utterly committed disciple of Jesus Christ – whose claims far outweighed those of any party leader.

The Rev CHRISTOPHER
BRICE
Director
Christian Action and
Response in Society
London SW1

Embrace the Christmas science cult and avoid unnecessary snowmen



MILES
KINGTON

This year's Melvyn Bragg Christmas Science Lecture is to be given by Professor Gene Jones at the Royal Broadcasting Institute next Wednesday. For those of you who cannot get to London or who aim to start their Christmas shopping that evening, I am pleased to be able to bring you the entire abridged text today and tomorrow.

"Good evening and welcome. As you know, the idea of the Melvyn Bragg Christmas Science Lecture is to popularise science by any means possible, including that of making it topical and interesting, and that is why on this day every year we look at all aspects of science which are peculiarly applicable

to Christmas time and see what lessons we can draw from it. "People are often amazed by the idea that there are connections between science and Christmas time, but in fact any science you care to name could be quoted for the purpose. Astronomy? Astronomy can explain the wise men's star. Chemistry? Chemistry can explain the affinity that brandy seems to have with butter, creating brandy butter, something which is only eaten at Christmas time. Mathematics...?"

"Ah, now, mathematics!

Maths is very involved with

Christmas. For instance, it is the

only time of the year that we

find ourselves counting back-

wards, because – anybody?

That's right! We count backwards for Advent! Yes, I know we count backwards for darts matches as well, but I'm just thinking of Christmas things today. Any more mathematical examples at Christmas time?

Yes, there are the twelve days of Christmas. There is the whole question of when Christ was born, and you may have read in a paper this week that an Italian expert now reckons that Christ was born in 12BC, which means that we celebrated the Millennium without knowing it in AD 1988...

"But let's take a simpler Christmas maths problem, that of providing everyone with their fair share of roast potatoes at the Christmas dinner. We all

know that mother divides the potatoes to give enough to every guest present. We also know that there is never enough to go round, and that someone goes short. How can maths help us here?

"Well, as a trained mathematician or at least statistician, I have observed that some people take more than others. I have also observed that the people who take more potatoes also take the larger potatoes. The solution is obvious. Along with the roast potatoes, also roast a quantity of large chunks of parsnip. The greedy people, going for the bigger bits, will be filling themselves up with parsnip, thus leaving ample potatoes for the less greedy.

"Anthropology, do I hear someone cry? Has anthropology got any lessons for us at Christmas time? Well, yes, it has. When last week's snow came, I went out in the field with my boy to roll a big snowball. Now, one thing we noticed as we rolled our snowball along and it got bigger and bigger, was that if you roll a big snowball, you roll more than just snow; you roll grass, and sheep's droppings, and twigs, and stones, all bundled up inside that big, three-foot-high snowball.

"From a distance your snowball looks big and white, but you know better; you know that the snowball is a bran tub of other things. If you took all the snow

away, there would still be a lot of non-snow material left – and this is precisely what happens when the snow melts! And this week, sure enough, the snow had all melted, even my big snowball, and what was left behind was an otherwise inexplicable little pyramid of grass, sheep droppings, stones and glass.

"Imagine if, as an anthropologist, you came across such a cache of objects. Aha! you might say to yourself, here is a tribe that worships glass, stone, sheep droppings, and twigs! Similarly, if you came across a pile of three pieces of coal, a carrot, four twigs and an old scarf, you might, as a scientist, be baffled. But as a Christmas

scientist, you would know immediately that – anyone? Very good! It was the remnants of a snowman! You see, we Christians scientists can explain things in terms of someone in the past having fun, a thing that anthropologists never let themselves do!"

"Tomorrow: why there is always one dud bulb in the Christmas lights, plus scientific musings on wet gum boots, the effect of medieval candles on the medieval ozone layer, how evaporation can help keep the Brussels sprouts warm, and why the human mind is incapable of drawing Christmas trees accurately. Don't miss part 2 of the Melvyn Bragg Christmas Lecture!

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JUZO ITAMI

Yoshihiro Ikeuchi (Jujo Itami), actor, film director and writer; born Kyoto, Japan 15 May 1933; married 1968 Kazuko Kawakita (marriage dissolved), 1969 Nobuko Miyamoto (two sons); died Tokyo 20 December 1997.

His father, Mansaku Itami, was a well-known film-maker, scriptwriter and essayist, born in Ehime on the southern island of Shikoku, and there Jujo Itami spent much of his childhood and youth. It was natural that he should follow in his father's footsteps. But from the start he was a rebel against the stifling conventions of Japanese society.

He attended Matsuyama Minami High School, where one of his friends was the future Nobel prize-winning novelist Kenzaburo Oe, who has left us a striking portrait of young Itami in his book of essays *Kaijiku suru kazoku* (1995), well translated by Stephen Snyder as *A Healing Family* (1996). In the essay "Sui Generis" Oe tells how the writer Ryotaro Shiba described Itami admiringly as an *jin*, a word Oe had to look up in the Kojien dictionary: "*jin*: Someone who is different from the norm; a superior person... A person who practises mysticism; a wizard, a foreigner."

When they first met, "Itami was already in the midst of a battle with the administration over



Itami: outsider of genius

the compulsory uniform rule". Oe says his friend suffered from infringements of his human rights - "oppression, bigotry, discrimination". He was unable to attend a university because he was expelled from school and could not sit the university entrance exam. So he started to work as an illustrator. "But there might have been a smoother, happier way for him to have realised his great potential." He was to remain a lonely individual, an outsider of genius.

Itami moved to Tokyo in 1960, and entered the Daiei movie company as an actor. He specialised in supporting roles, as in *Kon Ichikawa's Otoho* ("Younger Brother") and Yasuo Masimura's *Nise daigaku sei* ("Fake University Student"), both issued in 1960. In the same year he married Kazuko Kawakita. He left Daiei in 1961, and started writing talented literary essays, as his father had done. He played small parts in Nicholas Ray's 1963 film *55 Days at Peking* alongside Charlton Heston and Ava Gardner, and in Richard Brooks's *Lord Jim* (1965) with Peter O'Toole.

He joined the Nikkatsu Movie Co in 1964, and played supporting parts in his "cynical intellectual" vein in a number of movies including Nagisa Oshima's 1967 *Nippon shinsha ko* ("A Treatise on the Japanese Bowdy Song") and Ichikawa's 1975 adaptation of Soseki Natsume's classic *Wagahai wa nako dearu* ("I Am a Cat"). His acting career made a big step forward when he appeared in Yoshinobu Morita's 1983 box-office success *Kazoku Genu* ("Family Game"). He won acting awards for best supporting actor, and an Emmy for his Prince Genji in the classic television series.

But for Itami acting was just a means of becoming a director. In 1984 he was at last able to script and direct his first cinematic success, *Otoshi-ni* ("Funeral"), a wry, wickedly satirical comedy about the con-



The first 'noodle western': a scene from Itami's 1986 satire *Tampopo*

ventions of Japanese funeral ceremonies in which an elderly man dies, very improbably, of a heart attack after dining on an avocado. The whole drama is about the would-be-solemness yet comical way his bourgeois son and daughter-in-law strive to carry out the ceremonies according to precise rules. Itami's second wife Nobuko appeared in this and all his subsequent films, and it was a very big hit in Japan.

In 1986, he wrote and directed *Tampopo* ("Dandelion") a cruel satire about the "gourmet connoisseur" of the affluent Eighties. It was called "the first nook-and-corner western" because it was set in a down-and-out cheap *ramen* (instant noodles) joint. A truck driver falls for the proprietress and shows her how to transform her dump into a gourmet rendezvous priding itself upon serving the best bowl of *ramen* in town. True to the best western movie tradition, he drives off into

the sunset. There are several realistic portraits of Japanese and their comic attitudes towards food. It attracted large audiences in Japan but also in the United States and especially in France, that temple of superior cuisine, where all the little *ramen* shops catering to the Japanese in the Opera area began to boom, and served many foreign customers.

There followed a string of satirical successes, all starring Itami's wife, and dealing in an almost instructional documentary manner with various controversial themes: money in *Mamoru no onna* ("A Taxing Woman", 1987) and its sequel in 1989; sex in *Ageman* ("Good Luck Girl", 1990) and gangster violence in *Minbo no onna* ("Gang-fighting Woman", 1992).

Serious troubles for Itami began when the *yakuza* mob retaliated by sending five hit men to attack him with knives, inflicting severe wounds. But Itami recovered and went on undaunted to make more disturbing films like *Dashin* ("The Great Patient") in 1995, a comedy on stomach cancer which is also a profound meditation on death, and the 1996 *Supermarket Woman* laying bare hidden supermarket malpractices. In 1995 he also made a film based on his friend Oe's writings, *A Quiet Life*.

But misfortune continued to shadow Jujo Itami's existence. During a showing of *Dashin*, an ultra-rightist slashed the screen in protest against *Minbo no onna*'s alleged defilement of the Japanese flag. The police had to provide armed guards for Itami and his wife, but even this had its comic side, for in *Minbo no onna* we see Nobuko Miyamoto performing in her hilarious super-production of *Antony and Cleopatra* with a cop following her everywhere, disguised as a spear-toting Roman.

Photograph: Kobal Collection

The final blow to Itami's self-esteem came from scurrilous gossip about his sex life in *Flash*, one of the cheap sensational weeklies now proliferating in Japan. Revelations about Itami's involvement with a 26-year-old girl, with paparazzi photos to prove them, were to appear in the 22 December number. Itami denied all the charges, but as he wrote in one of his farewell notes, "to prove my innocence I jumped from the roof of his eight-storey block. He was dead on arrival at the hospital. The inquest showed he had been drinking heavily.

He stipulated that no funeral ceremonies should be held. Instead, Oe and his family will watch videos of all his films that let a breath of fresh air into the stagnant life of Japanese movies, now at last showing a revival, thanks to his uncompromising efforts.

- James Kirkup

PROFESSOR RONALD GULLIFORD

Ronald Gulliford, educationist; born Manchester 8 December 1920; Educational Psychologist, Bolton Education Committee 1949-51; Lecturer in Education, Birmingham University 1951-65; Senior Lecturer 1965-75; Professor of Special Education 1975-86 (Emeritus), Dean of the Faculty of Education 1979-81; CBE 1986; married 1949 Alison Dawe (died 1971; two sons, two daughters); died Birmingham 30 November 1997.

Ronald Gulliford was for 35 years a luminary of the Department of Education at Birmingham University and from 1975 until 1986 its Professor of Special Education. It would be difficult to overstate his influence on the academic study of educational needs and on the whole field of special education in Britain.

Developing from the pioneering research and theory in the field of child psychology and child development earlier in the century of people such as A. Gesell, Susan Isaacs, C. Burt and F.J. Schonell, his work has found wide practical application. He would not have considered himself a successful man, however, or even have thought about success. He was concerned with himself not at all, but with children, especially those by chance or accident handicapped or limited; with education and development; with improvement and betterment.

At the time of his appointment as Lecturer in 1951, the Birmingham Department of Education, under Edwin Peel, expanding and ready to be adventurous, was building up Educational Psychology. Gulliford was promoted to a Senior Lecturer in 1965, and 10 years later appointed to a new Chair

for Special Education, the first such Chair in England. By this time he was known not only in Britain but widely in the world, for his status as Dean of the Faculty of Education at Birmingham, his Presidency of the Association for Special Education 1962-64, for his training programmes for Commonwealth and foreign teachers, and for his chairmanship of the Education Advisory Committee of Central Television.

In 1973 the Minister for Education, Margaret Thatcher, had asked him to serve on a committee of enquiry "into the education of children and young people handicapped by disabilities of body or mind", under the chairmanship of Mary Warnock. The brief was broad and the subject full of complexity and wide-ranging enquiry. And it was not until March 1978 that the report was published, under the

changed title "Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Special Education". Gulliford had a considerable but characteristically temperate and helpful influence in widening the scope and focusing the vision of the committee.

He was born in 1920, the second son of a blacksmith originally of Somerset mining stock. The family moved to Gloucester when Ronnie was four, his father working in the Gloucester Railway Wagon and Carriage Company. His son inherited from him a liberal and progressive cast of mind, love of learning and merry humour. He was lucky in his schooling at an excellent elementary school (Calton Road) and then on a scholarship at the Crypt School. He acted in school plays - I remember *Miranda*; wrote poetry, debated, played the piano, including some zippy jazz, found

ed in the sixth form what he called wryly, tongue in cheek, the first Gloucester Group of Communist Intellectuals, and played in the first XV and XI. He was from an early age a keen naturalist and hill walker, and a music lover. In his private reading he ventured into philosophy, sociology, psychology, and modern art, and used to get his close friends to venture with him. Yet there was nothing precious, swotish or pretentious about him.

Unfortunately, despite the urging of the headmaster, his parents felt that they would not be able to support him at university, although he would almost certainly have won a scholarship. It was well before the time of readily available grants. So in 1939 he enrolled at Salter Training College for Teachers in Birmingham for the two-year Teaching Certificate, on a loan of £200 a year

from Gloucester Education Committee. Thus his connection with Birmingham and the foundation of his career began.

As a member of the Peace Pledge Union, when the Second World War came, he registered as a conscientious objector and was directed into teaching. While teaching full-time at Maidstone and then St Albans, he enrolled at Birkbeck College and gained his BA in Psychology. In 1948, still teaching, he took unpaid leave and took the diploma course in Educational Psychology at Birmingham University. He was appointed Educational Psychologist for Bolton Education Committee in 1949. Two years later, Birmingham called him back to be a Lecturer in Education.

There was a fine consistency and completeness in his professional life, and he must have

Franco Di Bella

Franco Di Bella, journalist; born Milan 19 January 1922; Editor, *Corriere della Sera* 1977-81; married (one son); died Milan 20 December 1997.

with Gelli: he came up with the money, Ottone was fired, and the paper's editorial line shifted starkly to the right.

Di Bella, a faithful news editor and longtime crime reporter, was the man asked to step into the editor's chair and balance the conflicting editorial and proprietorial interests.

There followed a strange, alarming period in the newspaper's history. Baffling stories would appear on the front page one day, only to disappear the next (they are now believed to have been coded messages to and from various intelligence organisations). Strident editorials, particularly during the 55 days of the Moro kidnapping, would call for a suspension of democratic rights and the round-up of suspected leftist sympathisers on sight. An interview with Gelli that had been considered tendentious and dangerous by a number of senior editors suddenly appeared in print one day occupying a whole broadsheet page.

Although widely respected for much of his career as a journalist's journalist, Di Bella will nevertheless go down in history as the man who allowed a national institution to be corrupted by one of the most insidious plots of post-war Italy. The P2 recruited a secret army of industrialists, politicians, intellectuals and journalists intent on overthrowing democracy and installing an authoritarian right-wing regime that would once and for all banish the Communist spectre from Italian public life.

The plot came close to realisation in the turbulent late 1970s. This was the period of Red Brigades terrorism, of the kidnap and murder of the Christian Democrat leader Aldo Moro, of a thousand and one intrigues and conspiracy theories, into which the *Corriere* allowed itself to be sucked.

He stipulated that no funeral

ceremonies should be held. Instead, Oe and his family will watch videos of all his films that let a breath of fresh air into the stagnant life of Japanese movies, now at last showing a revival, thanks to his uncompromising efforts.

- James Kirkup

The paper ran into financial trouble in the middle of the decade but found itself unable to raise bank loans because its then editor, Piero Ottone, was considered too hostile to the perennially powerful Christian Democrats. *Corriere*'s proprietors, the publishing house Rizzoli, dug themselves out of their hole by striking a dirty deal

- Andrew Gumbel

DAVID ROUSSET

David Rousset, writer, politician and activist; born Roanne, France 18 January 1912; died Paris 13 December 1997.

David Rousset was a resistance fighter, an intellectual, a Gaullist deputy and a self-defined activist of the Left. His long list of accomplishments does not, however, serve to classify an individual who was reviled in his time by the fellow-travelling Left (who he tried to force to face realities) and who was a distinctive moral voice in a turbulent century. There is something of the crystal spirit about Rousset, he sur-



Rousset: facts on the gulags

who lived through appalling times but who refused to compromise, and who remained an inspiration to many who were politically active.

Rousset was born in 1912 at Roanne, the son of a metal-worker. He was involved in socialist politics and then in Trotskyism during the social turbulence of the 1930s. Before the Second World War he was a journalist and contributor to many publications (including *Time* magazine).

His Resistance activities led him to be captured by the Gestapo October 1943. He was deported and worked in the salt mines, and then was sent to Buchenwald. He sur-

certain embonpoint but on his return he was a bag of bones.

He immediately set out to write his experiences and his memoir revealed in personal and detailed terms the extermination machine of Nazi Germany. His *L'Univers Concentrationnaire* is a harrowing account of the camps but also reveals the systems and the mechanism of Nazi Germany and its regime. The book received the Renaudot prize in 1946.

Rousset entered politics at the side of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus in the short-lived political group Rassemblement Démocratique

Révolutionnaire, but he began to distance himself from them as the Cold War gained in intensity. In particular he decided to reveal the existence of the "gulag archipelago" in the Soviet Union and was one of the founders in November 1949 of the International Committee Against Concentration Camps. Spain, China and other countries also came under investigation and condemnation.

It was with this issue of the Soviet camps that Rousset entered French public life with a shattering effect. Coming shortly after the trial in Paris over Victor Kravchenko's 1949 book *I Chose Liberty* on the same theme, Rousset's exposition caused the Communist Party to react. Rousset published an article in *Le Figaro* on the Soviet labour camps, using the term "gulag" before it became current. Through Louis Aragon and Pierre Dux of the Communist journal *Les Lettres Françaises* brought Rousset to court for defamation. The court case, which lasted from November 1950 to July 1951, was the occasion for a succession of witnesses to testify to the horror of the camps. Rousset published his own book *Pour la Vérité sur les camps* in 1951. He won the court case but was sent to Coventry by the intellectual Left.

Rousset broke with Sartre and his circle over the camps. Although no rational defence could be made of the Soviet system, Sartre rose to the challenge. While Sartre ran up a moral balance sheet and found Stalin in the black, Rousset went on to the offensive against the camp system. He continued to work to make known the facts about concentration camps and labour camps as well as to write prolifically in leading journals in France and America, and continued to write books about both the camps and general political topics.

In the 1960s he became sympathetic to General de Gaulle; he admired Gaullist foreign

policy with its assertion of the autonomy of French action. In June 1967 he warned of the dangers to Israel in the Gaullist bulletin, and called for the intervention of the great powers to guarantee Israel's existence.

In June 1968 he was elected left-wing Gaullist deputy for the Isère (Vienne). However he resigned the Gaullist whip in November 1970 in disagreement with the direction the movement was then taking, and in 1974 supported François Mitterrand. Rousset's later works included a discussion of war and the possibilities of nuclear holocaust.

- D. S. Bell

DEATHS

KALMUS: Anna (Nursy) on 14 December 1997, aged 89, died at home. Greatly missed by her three children, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

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BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

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consultant in research systems, 71; Mr Luther Grosvenor, rock guitarist, 48; Mr John Guinness, chairman, British Nuclear Fuels, 62; Mr Yousef Karsh, portrait photographer, 89; Mr Graham Kelly, chief executive, Football Association, 52; Miss Belinda Lang, actress, 44; Mr Christopher Lawrence, goldsmith, silversmith and modeller, 61; Sir Roger Neill, former chief executive, Sun Alliance, 66; Miss Joan Quennell, former MP, 74; Herr Helmut Schmidt, former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, 79; The Rev Christopher Turner, former Headmaster, Dean

Close and Stowe Schools, 68; Mr Rayner Unwin, chairman, Unwin Enterprises, 72.

Anniversaries
Birth: James Gibbs, architect, 1682; Sir Richard Arkwright, inventor of the spinning frame, 1732; Jean-François Champollion, Egyptologist, 1822; Hugh Miller, geologist, 1856; Sir Charles Lick, astronomer, 1865; Laurence Oliphant, journalist and traveller, 1888; Thomas William Hodgson Crofton, journalist, 1924; Anthony Smith, founder of the Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints), 1813; Samuel Smiles, author,

1812; "Lurd" George Sanger, circus proprietor, 1827; Joseph Arthur, first Baron Rank, miller and film magnate, 1888; Deafie Michael Drayton, poet, 1631; Alastair Riddoch Macdonnell, "Pickle" the Jacobite spy, 1761; Thomas Robert Malthus, economist, 1803; Hugh Miller, geologist, 1856; Sir Charles Lick, astronomer, 1865; Laurence Oliphant, journalist and traveller, 1888; Thomas William Hodgson Crofton, journalist, 1924; Anthony Smith, founder of the Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints), 1813; Samuel Smiles, author,

Bligh, sailed from Spithead for the South Seas, 1787; Joseph Hansom patented a type of cab, 1834; the Aldwych Theatre, London, opened, 1905; in Germany, Marius Van der Lubbe, a Dutchman, was found guilty of

17/BUSINESS

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Japanese gloom deepens as shares hit 30-month low

Fears of more corporate failures and deepening pessimism about the state of the Japanese economy sent share prices in Tokyo down to a 30-month low.

Meanwhile, the credit rating agency Moody's Investors' Service announced that it had downgraded the sovereign debt of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea to junk bond status. Stephen Vines in Hong Kong reviews the carnage.

Remarkably the downgrading of credit standings in four Tiger economies yesterday did little to shake South East Asian markets whereas in Tokyo the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) downgrading of Japan's economic growth outlook for the coming year was received very badly.

The IMF is now predicting that the economy will only grow by up to 1.1 per cent. Just two months ago it was forecasting growth of 2.1 per cent. Japan's Economic Planning Agency has also revised its economic estimates down but said over the weekend that it expected the economy to grow by 1.9 per cent in the coming financial year.

Neither prediction is very encouraging. Investors responded by marking down shares on the key Nikkei-225 index by 3.4 per cent, taking it to a low of 14,569 points before the market finally closed at 14,799. In the last four trading days the Japanese stock

market has plunged by more than 10 per cent.

At this level the market is well below the psychologically important 15,000 barrier which many analysts had predicted would not be breached without finding support.

However the buying support was notably absent yesterday. Moreover the market is now in danger of plunging into self feeding circle of decline. This is because the biggest holders of shares are Japanese banks, whose asset base is unusually dependent on equity holdings.

The government's tight fiscal policy is causing real pain. Aware of investors' concerns the Japanese government has made some concessions designed to stimulate economic activity. The biggest measure, announced last Thursday, was a two trillion yen (£9.2bn) tax rebate. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party is also proposing a massive bond issue to raise 10 trillion yen (£4.6bn) for the Deposit Insurance Corp. to protect depositors and help boost capital at troubled financial firms.

These measures have failed to impress investors who are still saying that the government has acted too little, too late. The government however insists that its actions will be enough to produce economic growth of close to 2 per cent next year.

Although the sell-off of the Japanese market has probably been slightly overdone and some bargain hunting is likely to lift shares in the near term, the underlying problems of the economy and an expected squeeze on corporate profits suggest that the stock market will not be able to sustain a recovery any time soon.

Meanwhile the selling pressure

on the Japanese yen mounted again yesterday with the yen falling to around Y130.5 against the United States dollar. Last week the Bank of Japan made an aggressive foray into the foreign exchange market to stop the yen losing value. This represented a backtracking of the previous policy which was to allow the yen to find its own value and sent uncertain signals to investors.

Yesterday, the Bank of Japan retreated to the sidelines and the yen slid back around one US cent. However, the government does not want the yen to fall and some market rumours suggest that it will try on Christmas Day to push up the value of the yen in the Japanese market which will remain open.

Whether this would be sufficient to shift investor sentiment towards the Japanese currency remains doubtful. However, as yesterday's events in Asian markets yet again proved, investor sentiment is hard to predict. Just a month ago Moody's savage downgrading of bonds and bank deposits in Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea and, to a slightly less extent, in Thailand would have sent their financial markets into free fall.

However, these markets are now sufficiently battered as to be virtually shock resistant. The stock market response was quite modest by the standards of extreme volatility which now prevail in the region. The Thai market suffered most, declining by 2 per cent. Both the Malaysian and Korean market slipped just 1 per cent, while the Indonesian market actually managed to inch forward a few points. Their currencies eased a touch but more on end-year balancing of books than the Moody's downgrading.



A dealer holding his head as he looks at share prices during the afternoon session at the Tokyo Stock Exchange yesterday. Japanese share prices dropped 3.4 per cent or 515.49 points, amid growing pessimism about the country's economy, to end the session at 14,799.40

Photograph: AFP

Birds Eye Wall's referred to MMC over supply deals

Unilever's Birds Eye Wall's ice-cream business has been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission over its supply deals with wholesalers. It is the second time in three years that the company has been accused of freezing out ice cream rivals. Nigel Cope, City Correspondent, reports

The decision to refer the issue to the MMC was taken by the Office of Fair Trading which said the existing structure of the distribution system restricts competition between wholesalers and between ice cream manufacturers.

Birds Eye's delivery of wrapped ice-creams to shops by a network of 32 exclusive operators, known as concessionaires. They undertake not to distribute other makes of ice-cream. The OFT said rival wholesalers, if supplied, received ice cream on less favourable terms.

It said the existing structure would restrict choice and possibly lead to consumers paying higher prices.

John Bridgeman, Director-general of fair trading, said: "At the end of the day, it is consumers who lose out if Wall's distribution policy restricts the choice of ice creams in a shop, or makes it difficult for manufacturers to enter or expand in the market."

The MMC said the practices under investigation would include:

- the refusal to supply wrapped ice-cream to wholesalers who are not dedicated distributors, unless it is on less favourable terms;
- the granting of discounts to retailers who buy Wall's ice-cream from dedicated distributors

but not to those who buy it from other suppliers.

Mr Bridgeman said: "Wall's concessionaires have an excellent reputation with retailers. But there are other wholesalers who would like to provide just as good a service." He said the current system operated by Wall's encouraged retailers to buy ice-cream from the Wall's dedicated wholesalers even if it meant they could not get other brands of ice-cream.

The OFT said it would have liked Wall's to have agreed to give equal terms to concessionaires and independent wholesalers for doing the same business. However, it said that though Wall's had been willing to make some concessions they did not meet all the OFT's concerns.

Birds Eye Wall's said it welcomed the MMC decision but did not agree with the OFT that its system restricts consumer choice. It said it has been in discussions with the OFT since February 1996 over various aspects of its distribution systems and planned to introduce changes in 1998.

Tony Pearce, the company's sales director said: "We look forward to the new enquiry and are confident that these new proposals, which amount to a restructuring of our terms and discounts will put beyond doubt the fairness of the system."

The latest move by the OFT follows an MMC inquiry into freezer exclusivity in the ice-cream trade in 1994. That investigation centred on the practice of Mars, Wall's and others of giving freezers to retailers as long as the shop only uses them for that manufacturer's products. The MMC found that the practice was not against the public interest.

Unilever shares melted slightly on the news, closing down 3.25p to 486.75p.

BNFL/Magnox merger means axe for 2,000

More than 2,000 nuclear power workers will be made redundant because of a Government decision to merge BNFL with Magnox Electric.

BNFL yesterday confirmed that approximately 10 per cent of the 19,000 workers at the two companies would lose their jobs as the two nuclear de-commissioning companies were brought together. John Battle, the energy minister, yesterday said the Government would transfer its shareholding in Magnox to BNFL, creating "better incentives for securing cost reductions".

Early next year, Magnox will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of BNFL and take on the running of BNFL's two Magnox stations at Sellafield, Cumbria and Chapelcross, Scotland.

John Guinness, the chairman of BNFL, insisted the deal was a "win-win-win" for taxpayer, company and Government alike. BNFL would no

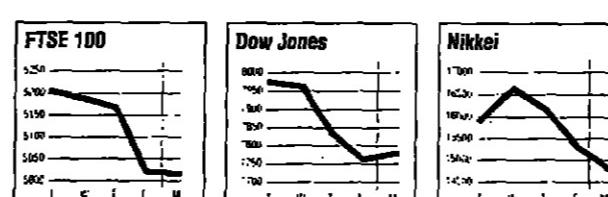
longer have to pay for Magnox profits. Combined expertise would also give the company a competitive edge in world markets for de-commissioning power stations and fuel. Mr Guinness said.

The Government is scaling down its commitment to pay billions of pounds in subsidy to Magnox for the cost of de-commissioning nuclear power stations, without which the merged company would have been bankrupt.

The Government will still allow the £3.7bn subsidy to rise by 4.5 per cent a year, but will cut out this year's increase, saving £60m. Gradual payments of the subsidy do not begin until 2006. It has also cut out altogether a "letter of comfort", established in 1990, without which Magnox would have been bankrupt owing to a £500m deficit.

- Andrew Verity

STOCK MARKETS



Index	Close	Change	Change %	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5018.20	-2.00	-0.04	5367.30	4036.80	3.46
Dow Jones	4715.99	-3.00	-0.06	4965.80	4394.20	3.55
Nikkei	11515.00	-1.10	-0.05	1207.30	1013.40	3.48
FTSE All Share	2360.10	-1.18	-0.05	2507.68	1989.78	3.48
FTSE SmallCap	2292.30	-2.80	-0.12	2407.40	2156.00	3.45
FTSE Feeding	1246.50	-1.80	-0.14	1346.50	1213.80	3.40
FTSE AIM	978.50	-1.30	-0.13	1124.00	965.90	1.08
Dow Jones	778.46	-20.93	-0.27	8282.03	6533.21	1.76
Nikkei	1578.40	-51.52	-3.27	2081.79	1495.73	1.04
Hong Kong	10172.47	-233.34	-2.24	10820.31	8775.98	4.17
Das	4043.02	-1.73	-0.02	4459.89	2833.78	1.85

INTEREST RATES

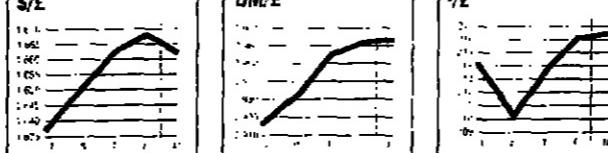


Money Market Rates	3 month	1 year	1 yr chg	10 year	10 yr chg	Long bond	1 yr chg	
UK	7.69	1.25	7.70	6.26	-1.34	6.23	-0.02	
US	5.91	0.31	5.97	0.16	5.72	-0.61	5.90	-0.68
Japan	0.73	0.27	0.72	0.15	1.92	-0.63	2.54	-0.66
Germany	3.71	0.46	3.97	0.68	5.35	-0.57	5.85	-0.64

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price up	Chg	% Chg	Falls	Price up	Chg	% Chg
Domestic Bus Syst	365.00	26.00	7.70	Gen Cable	85.00	-4.50	-5.03
Blue Circle Inds	315.00	21.25	7.66	Syntexpharma	48.50	-2.50	-4.90
Legal and Gen	515.00	35.00	6.67	Brst Steel	130.50	-6.00	-4.58
Thames Water	875.00	14.00	5.17	Biox Companies	457.50	-20.00	-4.19

CURRENCIES



Pound	at Spot	Change	Yr Ago	Dollar	at Spot	Change	Yr Ago
D-Mark	1.6513	+0.01	-0.01	0.6050	0.7291	+1.0480	1.5555
Yen	1.6555	+Y1.33	-191.31	1.2057	1.1937	-4.1134	1.1408
Euro	104.50	-0.40	-94.10	5.16	108.00	+0.10	98.40

source: Bloomberg

www.bloomberg.com

source: Bloomberg

Japan's stock market gloom is here to stay



I LOOK
THE DEEPENING,
THE CRISIS,
THE FIGHTER
MENT, AND
LETTERWARE
UT

Whatever the Japanese government does to revive its floundering economy, it is not going to be enough to revive the country's still more damaged stock market. Despite the euphoria with which last week's reform package was greeted, the stock market has since sunk back into gloom and despondency. Here's why.

Even the most backward looking members of the Japanese government now concede that the only way out of the bind Japan finds itself in is through structural reform. That means deregulation of service industries, liberalisation of capital and labour markets and a general opening-up of the country to foreign competition.

Unfortunately, the process of reform, as we know from our own experience in Britain, can never be an easy or short lived one. It is painful and disruptive and the positive results of it can take many years to show through. As we are already seeing, many companies in the protected service, construction and financial sectors will find it hard to survive. To make matters worse, long term demographic trends mean that Japan will have the most aged population in the world soon after the start of the new century.

There is nothing particularly surprising about all this. Many of these problems are present in almost equal measure in Europe too. The difference is that even at present depressed levels, Japanese stock prices are buoyed by valuations which are often twice the level of their Western counterparts. This can probably be justified in the case of Japan's big, internationally competitive corporations, but in the great bulk of com-

panies that make up the Japanese stock market, it cannot.

Structural reform will highlight and expose the weaknesses of certain key sectors within the Japanese economy as never before. As the process of reform progressively integrates Japan into the world economy, her stock market and its valuations must become integrated too. The Japanese Government seems belatedly prepared to push all the right buttons. Unfortunately, this seems likely only to worsen the position of its deeply troubled stock market.

The lunacy of the Eurofighter

It seems doubtful that George Robertson, the Secretary of State for Defence, has much in common with his predecessor, Michael Portillo. But one thing they do seem to share is a passion for the Eurofighter, another of those costly pan-European enterprises which appears to owe its continued existence more to the purpose of demonstrating that European countries and companies are capable of co-operating with each other than anything as banal as defence of the realm.

Mr Portillo so much wanted these deadly little toys that, throwing all his ratites out of the pram, he once said Britain would go ahead with the project even if the Germans pulled out. This could have proved a mighty costly piece of bravado had the Germans decided to call his bluff, for the fact of the matter is that Britain cannot afford to fund the whole thing itself. Per-

haps fortunately, Mr Portillo wasn't around long enough to find out what Helmut Kohl was really thinking. Mr Robertson has adopted the more diplomatic approach of attempting with apparent success, to bring the Germans onside.

In an Alice in Wonderland sort of way, this is quite an achievement. The point has already been made that we couldn't afford to go it alone, but now does it make sense any longer to abandon the project altogether, since Britain and her partners have already spent so much on it. Thousands of high tech jobs depend on the Eurofighter going ahead, as arguably does the future of our aerospace industry.

Despite the fact that the original military purpose of this aircraft, to shoot down the fighters protecting Russian nuclear bombers, doesn't exist any longer, the time for abandoning the Eurofighter has probably past too. The problem with weapons has always been that of obsolescence. Besides, our boys in the RAF need something to fly around for the next millennium and it just wouldn't be the same if we were forced to buy anything else.

The US is prone to speak an awful lot of guff about its wonderful free market economy. Through its defence budget, the US Government provides massive state support for industry and technological advancement. Why shouldn't Europe do the same? The F22, the US equivalent of the Eurofighter, is costing the Pentagon twice as much per aircraft as the Eurofighter will cost the Treasury. Though it seems to be a superior fighter with more advanced technology, it is none the less a US controlled product

and it might not be entirely wise to rely on the US for all our weaponry.

All the same, there is something peculiarly odd about the sight of George Robertson and his German counterpart desperately attempting to justify something they know in their hearts belongs to a bygone age. To judge by their remarks yesterday as they formally gave the go ahead for 620 of the fighters to be built, the main justification for this thing has become not so much the protection of Europe, but of jobs and the desire to compete on an equal footing with the Americans on all things military. Both goals might reasonably seem as out of date as items such as those little plastic sieves people put in their bath plugs to gather up hair.

Probably not.

Ramped out of sight in the early 1990s, Betterware shares soared to ludicrous heights before collapsed amidst a welter of profit warnings. This was not before Andrew Cohen, the founder, had sold a chunk of his stake for £3m at what proved to be the very top of the market. Those shareholders who interpreted this as the classic sell signal for all would have done well out of the company. The rest have not been so lucky.

There is always a whiff of controversy when managers take public companies private. They know the business better than anyone and what is a good price for them is obviously the reverse for everyone else. Furthermore, management rarely buy out a company without the intention of enriching themselves by eventually taking it public again or selling it on at a profit. In normal circumstances, shareholders would be well advised to give the Betterware management the old two fingers. If managers are not prepared to work as hard on behalf of shareholders as they are on behalf of themselves, they should be fired and new executives brought in who are.

Unfortunately, Mr Cohen is not going to give them that chance, for he has decided to back the management bid with his remaining 47 per cent stake. Mr Cohen is a wise old bird and he may know more than the rest of us, but from the outside it looks like a final kick in the teeth for outside shareholders. Even if they had wanted to, they won't be able to turn this offer down.

gpies plan in stadium akeover

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Freddie Fletcher, chief executive of Newcastle United, said: "This is another step forward for Newcastle's goal to become one of Europe's top clubs and this will be one of the best stadiums in Europe."

One football analyst said: "This is a better solution than the original project and it will calm some investors' nerves." Concerns over the new stadium project have contributed to Newcastle's poor share price performance. Since it floated on the stock market its shares have tumbled from 135p to 96p.

The extra seats and new corporate facilities will boost Newcastle's annual revenues by £15m a year. It will be funded by a combination of a bond issue based on ticket receipts, extra sponsorship and existing cash resources and the club said it would not raise ticket prices to finance the stadium overhaul.

The scheme has been submitted to Newcastle City Council for planning permission. If the Council give the go-ahead, construction work will start next May.

Newcastle is expected to announce a television deal with BSkyB and Granada early in the new year. Its new channel will show matches and club games, although it cannot show Premier League matches.



Moving in: BA's chief executive, Bob Ayling, yesterday led the airline's transfer to a purpose-built £200m business centre near Heathrow. The first 2,000 employees started work in the new facility and a further 2,300 will follow by next June, when the building will be fully open. Photograph: Evecatcher's Press

IE INDEPENDENT e 'Dirt Devil' Mains Vacuum £39.95 inc p&p

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Millennium bug prompts banking lobby

Fourteen of the world's largest investment banks have formed an ad-hoc pressure group on the "millennium bug" amid mounting frustration at the likely cost of the problem.

BZW, NatWest Markets, Nomura International and Lehman Brothers are among the investment banks who say they are increasingly frustrated at the lack of information from regulators on the issue. At a meeting last week, IT directors of the investment banks voted to appoint Firth Ross Martin, the IT search consultancy, to co-ordinate joint action to assess the risk.

Terry Rickerby, a Firth Ross Martin executive, said: "Throughout the year we've increasingly noticed frustration about the year 2000. They get no dialogue from the regulators, and no dialogue from the technical providers."

GDP slowdown blamed on retailing 'Diana effect'

The final estimate of third-quarter gross domestic product (GDP), released yesterday, has not altered the outlook for interest rates according to economists. Third-quarter GDP grew by 0.8 per cent - 0.1 per cent lower than initially estimated - and significantly less than the 1.0 per cent growth seen in the second quarter. This slowdown between the second and third quarters was largely due to the "Diana effect" that hit September retail sales. The current account was £473m in surplus in the third quarter, down from a second quarter surplus of £1.4bn, and roughly in line with market expectations.

Succession at Merrydown

Richard Purdey, chairman of troubled cider-maker Merrydown, has stepped down after 32 years with the group. His successor is Andy Nash, who helped bring Taunton Cider to the stock market and masterminded its subsequent sale to Matthew Clark. However, Matthew Clark has subsequently fallen on hard times and Mr Nash left the group last spring.

Austin Reed buys Country

Austin Reed is diversifying further into women's wear after paying £25.9m for Country Casuals in an agreed bid worth 13.5p a share. Holders of over half the shares have accepted the offer.

Toyota's Deeside go-ahead

Toyota is expected to confirm next month a decision to invest £240m in its engine plant on Deeside in North Wales to build engines for its new car model to be built in France. The formal announcement will be timed to coincide with Mr Blair's visit to Japan next month.

Sketchley profits up 25%

Diversified business services group Sketchley's pre-tax profits in the 28 weeks to 27 September were up 25 per cent at £3.3m on turnover that rose 54 per cent to £114.3m thanks to the acquisition of ARM.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Digital Antennas (I)	36.75m (29.86m)	-0.60m (-0.55m)	14p (-1.55p)	n/a
Li Dynat (I)	30.32m (29.82m)	1.56m (1.68m)	7.70p (0.22p)	3.0p (2.0p)
Freepages Group (F)	15.4m (4.7m)	-24.2m (-14.97m)	-3.46p (-3.28p)	-1/-
Golden Lane Inv (I)	0.940m (0.617m)	-0.58m (-0.231m)	-0.2p (-0.0p)	n/a
Ivory & Sons (I)	10.16m (10.38m)	3.97m (3.77m)	8.29p (7.66p)	2.65p (2.65p)
Swatch (I)	114.3m (74.2m)	3.3m (2.6m)	3.2p (2.8p)	18p (1.1p)
Savvy Asset Magnet (I)	1.07m (0.956m)	0.273m (0.238m)	3.7p (3.3p)	n/a
(F) - Final (I) - Interim : EPS is pre-exceptional *Dividend to be paid as a FID				

Start the New Year refreshed and invigorated by indulging yourself with the ideal present for your home and yourself. At Henlow Grange Health Farm there is a wide range of treatments such as manicures, facials and reflexology - the ideal way to overcome the indulgence and stress of Christmas. This package is worth £1,400.

To enter this competition simply dial the number below, answer the following question on line and leave your name and full address:

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For further information:

Henlow Grange: 01462 811111 (gift vouchers available)

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Call cost 50p per minute at all times. Winner picked at random after issue date 30 December 1997. Usual newspaper publishing rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

WHAT IF?

As another sporting year reaches its finale, Greg Wood looks back over the last 12 months and recalls what might have happened

WHAT IF

JOHN MCENROE HAD MELLOWED WITH AGE?

The umpire blanched visibly at the stream of abuse being hurled towards his chair. "Are you BLIND? The ball was IN! What kind of a jerk ARE you? You are sick, sick, SICK!"

At the other end of the court, a bemused John McEnroe looked on. This was not the Bjorn Borg he remembered. That unfortunate business with the underpants company had clearly taken its toll on the once unflappable Swede.

Still, at least the latest outbreak of Borg-rage – the third in the first set of their exhibition game alone – gave him a chance to see his opponent as others had once seen him. Anger, petulance, arrogance – all those negative emotions which used to grip McEnroe so frequently, back in the days when his life was dominated by worthless, material desires, like winning Wimbledon.

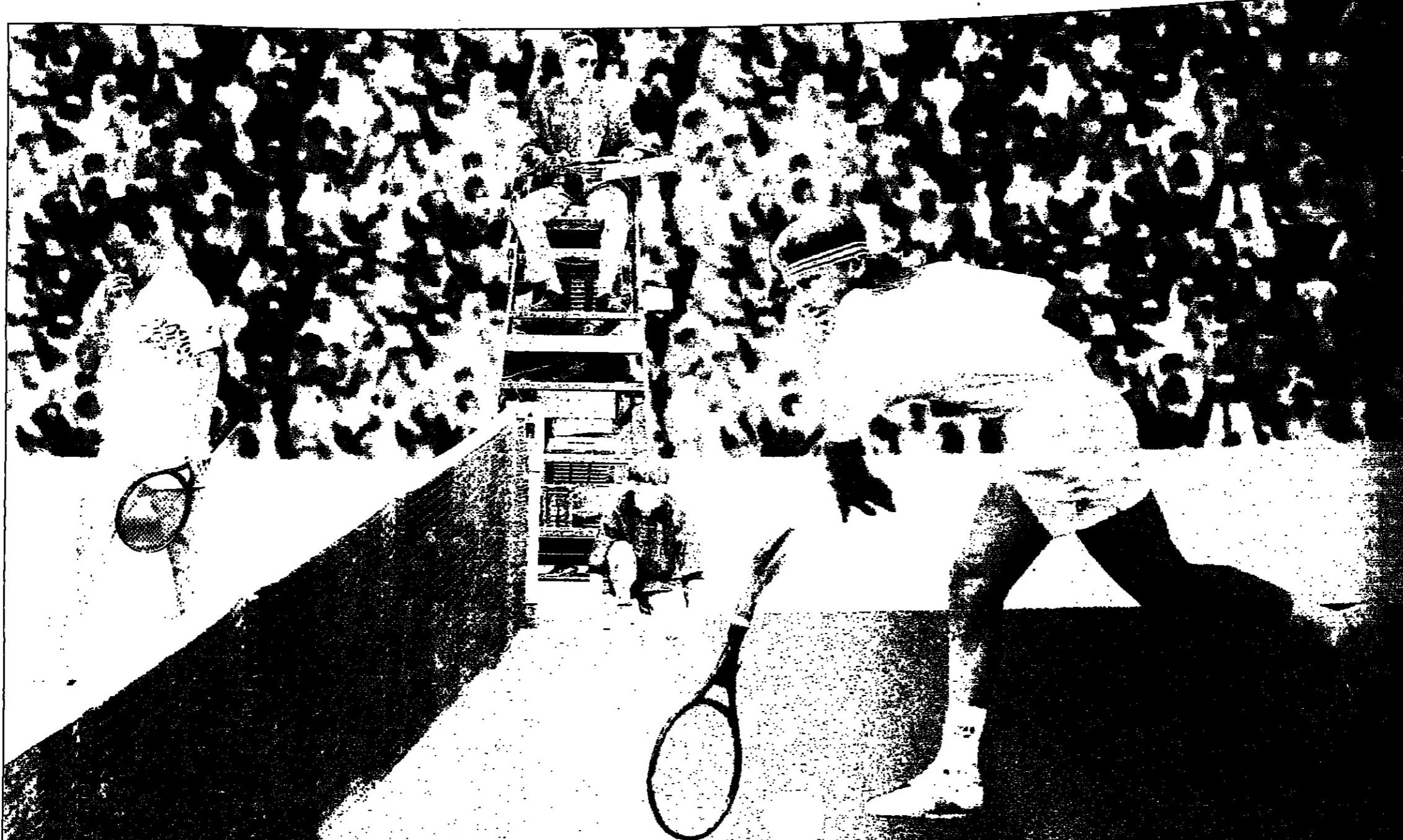
How silly it all seemed now. As Borg advanced on the chair, a disturbing gleam in his eye and flecks of foam starting to form around the corners of his mouth, it was just like one of the visualisation exercises at the retreat.

To think that he had almost turned his best friend down when he suggested that a week or two with the hippest swami in New York might help him to chill a little. Yeah, right, he'd thought. Love and peace. Sounds like the pits of the earth.

And so it was for the first 10 days. The Purple Flower People plied him with compassion, understanding and extraordinary quantities of incense, but still the demon within him resisted. And then, quite unexpectedly – enlightenment. The bitterness and rage which had tormented him for so long fell away like a second skin, and the new John McEnroe was born: gentle, calm and generous to a fault. Not to mention a double fault.

It meant, of course, that he was utterly hopeless at tennis. The purple robes and the reluctance to send a pass down the line when his opponent had gone to such trouble to run to the net were bad enough, but the two minutes of silent contemplation whenever he changed ends meant that he was forfeiting every other game. From SuperBrat to SuperPrat, the headlines had read. But what matter, so long as his karma was in tune with the universe?

How Borg could do with a little of the same inner peace now. Sadly for the umpire, the Swede had recently discovered that one of the new graphite rackets could do far more damage to an errant line-judge than one of his old-fashioned wooden implements. By the time the security men finally dragged him in, swearing and screaming, towards a wait-



Swedish psycho Bjorn Borg vents his anger on another racket while John McEnroe struggles to remember his mantra in their recent re-match which ended with Borg's disqualification

Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

ing police car, the poor official was barely conscious. Just enough breath remained before oblivion claimed him, though, to grasp the microphone and croak: code violation, Mr Borg. Game, set and match to Mr McEnroe.

It's just like I'm always saying, McEnroe thought, as he plucked a flower from a fan and threaded it carefully into his hair. Nice guys can be winners too.

WHAT IF

IAN WRIGHT HAD BEEN INJURED ON 13 SEPTEMBER?

It was only the tiniest of splinters which lodged itself in the middle toe of Ian Wright's left foot as he paddled towards the bathroom on the morning of 13 September, but it was enough.

As he limped back to the bedroom to phone Arsène Wenger and rule himself out of the game that afternoon, the Arsenal striker cursed his misfortune. He was still one goal short of Cliff Bastin's all-time club record, and though the lethal finishing which had long been his trademark had deserted him in recent weeks, he had really fancied himself to get a couple, perhaps even three, against Bolton later that day.

The phone rang as he was leaving for Highbury and the vital game against Manchester United. "I'm sorry, Ian," the marketing manager from Nike said. "But sales are going through the floor. Kids are writing to Santa saying they want any boots he's got so long as they're not Nike. It's nothing personal, but as of this moment, you're fired."

As he turned into the bedroom he winced, and not just because of the throbbing pain in his foot. There, neatly folded on a chair, was the T-shirt so thoughtfully provided by Nike, his sponsors, to celebrate the impending moment of triumph. "179 – Just Done It," the slogan read. As he dialled Wenger's number, Wright promised himself that while Bolton might have been spared, someone else would suffer.

But as autumn gave way to winter, it was Wright who did the suffering. Games against Chelsea, West Ham and Everton passed with the record still elusive as ever, and soon his famous self-confidence was visibly crumbling. Even Barnsley's porous back four kept him at bay, and on the rare occasions when he did get a sight of goal, Wright's feeble attempts to finish were making him a laughing stock. And when the visiting fans started chanting "You're even worse than Collymore" during the goalless draw with Villa at the end of October, the man with the power to make or break him knew that something had to give.

Suddenly, the telephone rang. "Boss, it's me, Ian. I'm fit. I'm ready for action and guess what – I've got some boots." It was the answer to Wenger's prayers.

Who will ever forget the brilliant four-goal performance by Wright at Selhurst Park which took him to the record, and then beyond? Or the strikers' tearful press conference afterwards? "I'd like to thank Arsène Wenger for believing in me," Wright stammered. "But most of all, I'd like to thank Freeman, Hardy and Willis."

What I wrote to bring about the third complaint – that the Cup had shown up rugby here – has been abundantly justified by the course of events. In the semi-finals of the two competitions, the European Cup and the European Conference, the British Isles had two representatives, respectively Bath and Newcastle. The other six clubs were all French. Bath survived to go on to play Brive in the final at Bordeaux.

On the second complaint I plead guilty. Instead of Cardiff winning undeservedly by one point, which is what I wrote, they'd lost deservedly by one point. I hope that makes my Welsh correspondents happier. I am sorry about the mis-

take, for I try to get things right, but we are none of us infallible. To conclude that, because a writer makes one mistake, therefore everything else he or she writes is questionable, makes everyone who has put pen to paper or finger to keyboard equally suspect, which is absurd.

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It is no disrespect to them or to Brive that both semi-finals could easily have gone the other way.

WHAT IF
COLIN MONTGOMERIE HAD ACTUALLY LISTENED TO SEVE?

"Six-iron". Colin Montgomerie snapped to his caddie without a second thought. A hundred and eighty yards to the flag, a gentle breeze at his back, and both the Americans plugged it fairway bunkers while his ball had flown straight down the middle. All square with one to play, a Ryder Cup point there for the taking – it was no time to dither and let the pressure creep up on you.

But no sooner had Wright begun to acquaint himself with his new northern team-mates, than Fate again stepped into his life. A series of bizarre training-ground accidents robbed Wenger of striker after striker, and as the Frenchman sat down to write out the team sheet for the match at Wimbledon on 22 December, his head slumped to the desk in despair as he found himself pencilling in Adams and Winterburn up front.

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And so it was that four days later, in Madrid cathedral, the victorious American team joined the Europeans in mourning for Spain's most famous sporting son. Meanwhile, in a secure unit somewhere near Valderrama ...

go through it. And you don't want to go into the bunker on the left."

"Thank you, captain," Monty hissed, as the match referee prepared to fine him for slow play. "But I think a six will be sufficient."

Ballesteros' eyes flashed bright with Latin passion. "Who built this course, hombre?" he spat. "Me, that's who, and I'm telling you, I'm ordering you to use a five. If you don't, I swear your name will be in the envelope before the singles. I'm sure" – he smiled wickedly – "Tom and I can come to an arrangement." The ruddy Montgomerie complexion turned positively claret. "All right," he yelled. "A five-iron it is."

His hands were twitching with rage as he finally addressed his ball, but the contact was a sweet one. Up and up the ball soared, dead on line for the flag. And on and on it flew – straight into the grandstand behind the green.

For a moment, the spectators fell silent, all eyes on Ballesteros. "Well don't blame me," the Spaniard said at last. "It's not my fault if you hit it too hard. No wonder you've never won a major. Do you know how many majors I've won, Monty? Do you? Why don't I count them for you. Uno, dos, tres ..."

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WHAT IF
INZAGHI'S HEADER HAD GONE IN?

For all the valiant effort that had gone before, the chance which presented itself to Filippo Inzaghi with two minutes of injury time already played in Rome was a very straightforward one, and the striker placed his header into the top corner without a second thought. Throughout both Italy and Scotland, joy was unconfined.

For Glenn Hoddle, though, there was only a play-off and, worse, the Monday papers to look forward to. "String Him Up!" screamed the Sun. "Agreed. But Shoot Him First" added The Times. And the draw was not kind – Russia, with the first leg away from home.

To this day, no one is precisely sure what happened during that first half in Moscow. At the insistence of Umbro, England took to the field in their new all-white strip, just as a blizzard appeared from the Urals. Unable to see each other, let alone the ball, Hoddle's men could only accept the evidence of the scoreboard as they trooped off 45 minutes later. It told them that they were 3-0 down.

More suitably attired in red for the second half, and with the snow at their backs, England were saved from any further embarrassment, but the damage

bad been done. "Don't Come Home, Glenn, Or We'll Beat You Up", was the friendly advice from the Financial Times.

It was clear that the second leg at Wembley was going to be a tough assignment when the Russians chose to line up in an unusual 10-0-0 formation. Despite flinging everything they had at the massed defence, England had nothing to show for their efforts with just 15 minutes left on the clock, and the few thousand supporters who had not already left were queuing for the exit. And then, a free-kick 25 yards from goal, and suddenly a buzz of excitement swept Wembley. "Glenn's stripping off!"

Scientists may insist that it is against all the laws of physics, but those who were behind the goal still swear that Hoddle's kick moved left, right, up, down, left and finally right again to beat the goalie's despairing dive. They gasped again two minutes later as Hoddle rose majestically between four hulking defenders to head home Beckham's corner, while his equaliser, deep into extra time, was more extraordinary still.

That he beat every player on the pitch before slotting home was one thing, but that he won the ball himself with a crunching tackle moments earlier was quite incredible.

After that, the winner was a mere formality, and the ticket to France was at last secure. "You Were Lucky," said the Sun next morning. "We'll Get You Next Time," warned the Mirror. After all, some things never change.

Television is insidious: the director and the lens create their own heroes

When last I commented on the Heineken European Cup, I received numerous not exactly abusive letters – for rugby followers are the most civil of correspondents, more so by far than political enthusiasts – but certainly unfriendly communications, chiefly from my fellow countrymen. Their complaints were as follows:

First, I had given my opinion that Pontypool were lucky to get away as lightly as they did for the behaviour not so much of their players in France as of their fans. Second, I had got the score of the Bourgoin-Cardiff match wrong, saying that Cardiff had won an undeserved victory east of Lyon. And, third, I had written that the progress of the competition thus far reflected badly on the general standard of the top clubs in England and

take, for I try to get things right, but we are none of us infallible. To conclude that, because a writer makes one mistake, therefore everything else he or she writes is questionable, makes everyone who has put pen to paper or finger to keyboard equally suspect, which is absurd.

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It is no disrespect to them or to Brive that both semi-finals could easily have gone the other way.

ALAN WATKINS



ON RUGBY

In which case the finalists would have been Pau and Toulouse. Brive won because they scored an extra try, two to Toulouse's one, though their first try was clearly questionable, as Stuart Barnes (who is turning

or, if he prefers it, a summariser) demonstrated conclusively on Sky television.

They won also because Christophe Lamaison kicked some crucial penalties in extra time and was not reduced to a wreck by his failure to kick a conversion which would have won the match after 80 minutes. "Oh, the poor lad," the commentator Eddie Waring said spontaneously when Don Fox missed a conversion in similar circumstances in the League Cup final at Wembley many years ago.

Oddy enough, and for whatever reason, I could not summon up quite the same sympathy for Lamaison. It may be because his team were being given another chance, which they narrowly took, whereas Fox's team simply lost.

Brive won because of theulti-

mate reliability of Jonathan Caldwell's boot. It should do the club a lot of good. Tony Swift, their chief executive, was quoted on 18 December as saying that Bath were operating at a large financial loss and would decline further unless their Rec ground was redeveloped. A European Cup final will not by itself rebuild the ground. But it will certainly help.

The club or, rather, the first team, have certainly had an up-and-down time lately, chiefly down. Perhaps it is the curse of television. The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, allowed the cameras in, and took what has happened to it since. Bath rugby club did the same and, though their plight is not nearly so desperate, they do not baffle the rugby universe as once they did.

Television is an insidious medium because both the director and the lens itself, operating as an independent optical force, create their own heroes and, not villains exactly, but anti-heroes.

Thus Jon Sleighholme should not appear live on camera unless he is keeping his mouth shut and doing what he is good at (even if Bath do not appear to realise it), which is playing rugby. John Hall wore an expression of perpetual puzzlement throughout, as well he might in the circumstances. Graham Dawe, by contrast, was a star, someone the camera evidently loved.

Swift was not quite in Dawe's category. But he seemed sensible and incisive, both qualities in short supply at the Rec these days. I wish him well.

Arsenal Bergkamp indiscipli

